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H. WALTER BARNETT.

THE COUNTESS OF CARDIGAN.

1 Park Side, S.W.



COUNTRY LIFE
THE Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits

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WHEAT AND BREAD.

If the present condition of the wheat market had been reached twenty years ago it would have caused something like consternation. The fall in value has been one of the most extraordinary that has occurred since the beginning of the great depression thirty years ago. In the seventies farmers began to feel anxious if wheat went below forty shillings a quarter, and it was generally assumed that this price was necessary to make the crop a profitable one. Between 1875 and 1883 it oscillated between forty-five and fifty-six shillings a quarter. Then alarm began to be felt because in 1884 it dropped down to thirty-five shillings, and the wheatland after that began to be contracted, until in 1900 the crop was harvested upon the smallest area on record—less than a million and a-half acres.

But the farmers who grumbled in 1884 at wheat going below forty shillings a quarter were to have much greater cause of complaint within a few years. In 1889 it fell below thirty shillings a quarter, and since then it has become a belief amongst wheat-growers that thirty shillings represents the remunerative margin. Of course, we have to remember that during the intervening years many improvements in cultivation have been effected, and the growing of wheat is much cheaper than it was in the middle of last century; so that those who considered forty shillings a fair price in the seventies were not unreasonable in holding that thirty shillings was a moderately good return in the eighties. But the limit of depression had not been reached, and during the nineties the price of wheat fluctuated a great deal; but though it touched on one occasion thirty shillings, it remained very much below it for the rest of the time.

Once or twice since then it seemed as if the good old times were coming back again to the farmer. Financial operations in New York, the occurrence of the American War with Spain, our own South African War, and one or two events of a similar kind, were seized as a pretext for running up the price of wheat. This proved, however, to be a fictitious rise, and now we seem to be going back to the lowest limit. Incidentally it may be pointed

out that the consumer derives very little benefit from this. There is very seldom any exact correspondence between the price of bread and the price of wheat. It is true that the bakers to some extent use such a trivial excuse as the putting on of a registration duty of a shilling a quarter as a reason for increasing their prices, but wheat has to fall in value to a very considerable extent indeed before they lower the price of the household loaf. This is a fact that has to be taken into careful consideration by those who profess a great anxiety about the distress of the unemployed. If bread were as cheap as it ought to be, this itself would go far to relieve the most pressing wants of those who are out of work.

It has been one of the greatest scandals of our time that the huge importation of foreign food has benefited the middleman much more than the producer, who has either to sell wheat at a ruinous price or use it for feeding his cattle, while the baker goes on selling bread to the poor at the same cost per loaf that he charged last year, when wheat was between three and four shillings more a quarter here than it is now.

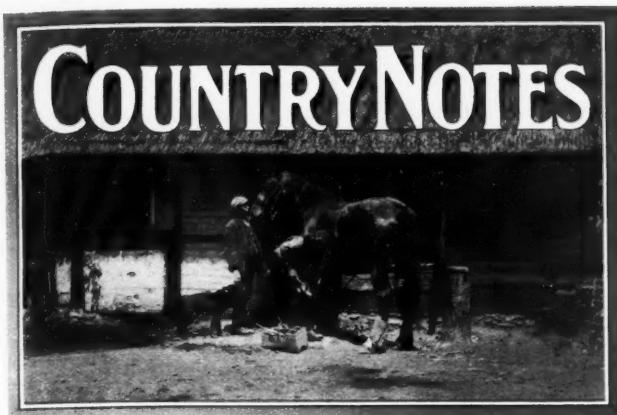
At this particular time of the year a fall in the price of bread would be extremely welcome to the poor, because that other necessity of life to them, meat, is higher in price than they have been accustomed to find it. Here, again, accident has played a very large part, by what we can only describe as a curious coincidence. We had trouble simultaneously both in Australia and America. The drought in the former country has to a very serious extent decreased the quantity of sheep possessed by the colony which supplies us with the greater part of our frozen mutton, and one feature of livestock as distinguished from grain is that recovery takes much longer. You can sow wheat-fields and reap the harvest in a single year, but if once a flock of sheep is very much reduced by famine or disease, it cannot be replaced all at once unless importation is easy, and that is not so in Australia. Breeding ewes had been very much diminished in number, so that a large production of lambs is this year out of the question, and if the stock is to be increased, it will be necessary for some years to come to keep nearly all the ewe lambs for breeding purposes. Thus it is quite possible that for some time to come the supply of mutton from Australia may be short of what it used to be, and of course that must act as a factor in maintaining the price of English meat. From the Argentine and from America it is, however, possible that we may now obtain very large supplies, although curiously enough there is very little sign of their actual appearance at present.

Taking the import figures for last week, that is to say, the week ending March 21st, we find a decrease from nearly all the sources from which meat is obtained. Fewer oxen, bulls, cows, calves, sheep, and lambs were imported, the decrease in each case being a considerable one. We had much less fresh meat; less beef, mutton, and pork, the decrease being very considerable in beef and mutton, and trivial in pork. We had very large decreases in salted and pressed meat, and they were distributed very equally among the various items of bacon, beef, hams, and pork. Meat enumerated as "preserved otherwise than by salting," which we take to be an official phrase for cold storage, shows a decrease, that must be described as extraordinary, from 18,691cwt. to 5,054cwt. Now these figures contrast in a very singular fashion with those relating to cereals, since we had during the same period much more wheat-meal and flour, barley and Indian-corn.

It is certainly a very interesting subject of speculation as to what all this is going to lead to. It seems to be probable for the moment that wheat will keep on lowering in price, and in that case bread sooner or later will have to follow, and meat is not likely to be maintained at a high price which has been brought about by merely phenomenal causes. High as prices are, a temptation for foreign and colonial traders to flood our markets is a very great one; but the consolation is that although one class usually suffers owing to the cheapness of food, the general effect of the population is to bring about a revival of trade. If people have less to spend on the necessities of life they are unable to buy luxuries, and that is why during the depression of agriculture, trade had a longer run of prosperity than is previously recorded in history.

Our Portrait Illustrations.

LADY CARDIGAN, who was married last Monday, is the only daughter of the late Mr. John Madden of Hilton Park, Clones, Ireland, and of Lady Caroline Madden, sister of the late Earl of Leitrim. The Earl of Cardigan is the only son of the Marquess of Ailesbury; he is captain in the Wilts Imperial Yeomanry, and served in South Africa, where he won the Distinguished Service Order. On page 399 will be found portraits of the Ladies Blanche and Kathleen Beresford and Lord Tyrone, the children of the Marchioness of Waterford.



NOT many birthdays are kept up for a period of three centuries, and the tercentenary of Queen Elizabeth can scarcely be allowed to go by without remark. It was celebrated appropriately enough by the Royal Geographical Society, and several eminent men made speeches more or less germane to the history of Great Britain since the death of the famous Queen. But perhaps the most remarkable thing is the way in which we seem to have returned to the spirit of those early days. The soldiers and navigators who served under Queen Elizabeth were among the most distinguished this country has produced, and laid the foundations of the great Empire which is now a world's wonder, for there has been no Empire like it since the beginning of time. It is as great in extent as those of Greece, Rome, and Persia united, and in the future it seems almost impossible that any greater Empire should arise, because the whole earth has now been exploited, and there is little or nothing to discover. Most fitting, then, was it that we of the twentieth century should pay a tribute of respect to that particular age which we love and imitate most.

The late Dean Farrar was a type of clergyman of whom we are never without one or two in Great Britain, be it a Dean Stanley or a Kingsley. He was far from being a mere theologian, and the works by which he is best known are not of that class of learned dissertations with which the names of bishops and other clerics are usually associated. Who does not remember his fine translation from Plato, "Star of my stars most starlike, would that I were the welkin, starry with infinite eyes, gazing for ever at thee"? In "Eric" he wrote a pretty boys' book, that has run through many editions and is almost as popular as "Tom Brown's Schooldays," though to some extent lacking the robust vigour of that work. He was also the author of several tales of a similar character; and in all respects was one of the best-equipped literary men of our time, though curiously enough what is generally called his masterpiece, "The Life of Christ," was very well described by the clever *Saturday Review* of twenty years ago as "Smith's Dictionary of the Bible done into fine English."

As a theologian Dean Farrar's popularity rests greatly on the fact that he combated the doctrine of eternal punishment at a time when to do so was accounted as heresy. Opinions have changed so much in this respect during the last quarter of a century, people's ideas have become so widened and liberalised, and the broad-minded parson has become so little of a rarity, that we can scarcely realise the courage required in Dean Farrar to protest against the doctrine of eternal punishment. He did so, however, and bravely maintained his point from day to day, till he had the satisfaction at last of coming to a time when he found his belief was generally received. Until quite recently it was a pleasure within the reach of every Londoner to hear his sermons, and any rhetoric more finished and scholarly and eloquent it would have been difficult to find. He was not a very old man when he died, having been born in 1831, and the last years of his preaching were perhaps the finest. It was as if his gift had ripened with the ebbing years, and his precise, yet poetic, mind kept on maturing to the very last.

Mr. Hanbury in the House of Commons on Monday night made a little speech of great interest to those who live in the country. In the first place, he seems disposed to help on the Bill for dealing with the injuries done by sparks from railway trains. In the second, he has resolved upon the appointment of advisory councils. For the latter purpose England has been mapped out into some twenty districts, each of which will have a committee, whose duty it will be to advise the Board of Agriculture on points connected with its policy. All the same, Mr. Hanbury at the beginning declares that the Board will not

bind itself to be guided by these councils. The worst of all such bodies is that they are in the habit of adopting what are very properly called "snowball resolutions." In other words, motions are forwarded to them, which they pass in a more or less formal manner, but their advice can really only be useful in regard to the local matters which they understand, and to those they ought to limit their attention.

The next of the great Continental automobile races is to take place in May, and the course is to be from Paris to Madrid. This will mean going by the road through Bordeaux, Bayonne, Hendaye, St. Sebastian, and so on. Through France, as we all know, the roads are of almost unequalled excellence, both for their surface and for their breadth; but it is said that in Spain there are some turns so sharp that they cannot be negotiated in a motor without backing, and this on the very road that will be the course of the proposed race. Across the Pyrenees the road is better than might be expected. It is not until after St. Sebastian is passed that the real trouble seems likely to begin; but by all accounts it is likely to be worse when it does begin than even at the worst points of the course between Paris and Vienna.

A further possible source of trouble in the projected race is the hostility of the country people in Spain to the motors, which they regard, with a certain justice, as dangerous to the life of their poultry, their dogs, and their children. But lately this was experienced, when the Minister of the Interior was passing over the route of the race on a prospecting journey. At a certain point in Castille, where the road is particularly bad, a trench was found dug across the track, and since this did not effect its purpose of causing a general upset, the playful country people expressed their disappointment by pelting the motor with stones. These are the little incidents that may add piquancy to the affair, if there be any danger of the competitors finding such a race too slow. But we understand that emissaries are at work all along the line soothing the feelings of the peasants, telling them that the race will bring money into the country, and expatiating on the magnificent spectacle that it will present to them, so that it is probable enough that all will go off quietly. Of course, on the day of the race itself there will be sentinels along the route to see that it is clear.

A SERENADE.

A linnet at thy lattice 'lights,
Thy love by tender strains to win;
Thy casement ope and take him in
To cheer thy days and soothe thy nights.

He doth not pine for mate nor nest,
Another lowlier hope is his;
He pants to feel thy lightest kiss
And lie a moment on thy breast.

O shield thy bird from wind and rain,
And let him make thee music sweet!
Thou lookest, love, adown the street—
"What singing bird doth peck my pane?"

Thou musest, and a gracious smile
Flits for a moment o'er thy face,
And then thou passest to thy place;
His fluttering heart doth break meanwhile.

ELIZABETH GIBSON.

Nothing but admiration can be felt for the scheme of holding a miniature Bisley at the Crystal Palace. In old times, as General Ian Hamilton reminded those who were at the opening, England's strength was largely due to the marksmanship of her soldiers, and to keep this efficient was a continual anxiety with the Government of the day. It was easier then than now, because people lived out of doors and followed open-air pursuits. In our time the tendency is for them to get into the shop and factory and warehouse, where they have little inducement to cultivate physical exercise of any kind. But the formation of miniature rifle clubs, of which there are about 125 throughout the country, has done much to remedy this state of things, and it was a natural consequence that a meeting should be organised at which prizes would be offered for competition. The public took very kindly to the suggestion, and a great number of valuable prizes have been presented. The result can hardly fail to be of great benefit to the marksmanship of our future Army and to fit our citizens to defend themselves in case of the landing of a foreign fleet. No one can tell how soon that may happen, because this is an era of invention, and something might be found out at any time that would give our enemies their opportunity.

The idea of holding an exhibition of relics of Charles Dickens is extremely interesting. It was originated, we believe, by the Dickens Fellowship, and is supported by such eminent Pickwickians as Mr. Swinburne and Mrs. Meynell. Some of the exhibits which we are promised to see on view illustrate in a

curious way some of the habits of the great novelist. He once wrote a travesty of Othello for use in his own household, and a page of this singular work survives to attest the fact. They have got the dark letter-box from the dark court in Fleet Street into which his boyish hand dropped his first manuscript. There is also to be shown the furniture which he had in the office of *All the Year Round*, and relics are to be brought from the Maypole at Chigwell and the Leather Bottle at Cobham. So that a visitor will, as it were, be brought into an atmosphere reeking of Dickens, and will, we hope, go back to read his novels with renewed zest.

Exit, coarse fish; enter, trout—is the kind of note that becomes seasonable about this date in the angler's diary. To be sure, a good few trout may have been taken already with the February Red or the Blue Upright in those Devon streams where the latter local little fly is fed on by the small but gallant trout of Devon; but the serious and the general business of trout fishing is hardly yet beginning, or only just. Salmon, of course, have been caught in plenty by the spring angler, but salmon stand in a different category, from this point of view. There hardly is a month when you may not angle for salmon if you choose your river, even within the narrow confines of this United Kingdom. With the coarse fish (so rudely named) exit also that exceedingly delicate fish the grayling, who is so interesting in the months when the trout is employed in his domestic affairs. The grayling for the moment is not in high favour. There began to be too many of him in some of the rivers, such as the glorious Test, which he ought to occupy merely as a complement, and by no means as a substitute, for the trout. Our coarse fish, which now retire for a while, have not distinguished themselves on the whole by coming largely to the bag in the past season; but the pike, the noblest of them all, has been a notable exception, and some very big specimens of his kind have been caught—on the spinning bait, too, which is good, in so far as it goes to disprove the theory that you cannot get big pike to take anything but the live bait, which is a cruel form of angling.

THE SENSE OF SPRING.

There's a sense of spring in the air to-day,
A touch of April, a thought of May:
From whence descending 'twere hard to say,
For the woods are black, slim beech-boughs grey,
The furrowed fields yet bare and red
Beneath the ploughshare's even tread:
But from somewhere steals a warm earth scent,
Sunshine, rain, and the west wind blent.
A moment keen, then it flits away—
Too early, too early, to linger or play.
A touch of April, a thought of May,
There's a sense of spring in the air to-day!

EDITH C. M. DART.

It is only necessary to see the collections of loafers of all classes who hang about their small properties gun in hand on the Sunday in France to realise the benefits that we receive from the law which forbids shooting in Great Britain on the first day of the week. It is a restriction at which the modern spirit is rather inclined to chafe when only a few days can be taken from the weekday business. But the example of France may console the chafers with the reflection that unless Sunday shooting were penal every poacher and loafer would be out on that holiday, and the trouble of the keeper would be increased not a little. The powers of the *garde champêtre* under the French Republic are so infinitely more drastic—smacking, indeed, of a feudal system—than under the English monarchy, that poaching is a very perilous business indeed. When a man who has broken a fence in pursuit of game may be shot on sight by the keeper, he is apt to be a deal more careful about the *meum* and *tuum* of hares and pheasants than where he is subject to a small fine by a magistrate or to the excellent chance of acquittal by the verdict of some twelve congenial spirits. The fine his poaching club will pay for him, and it is only cases aggravated by assault that will come before the jury. The recent trials of the river-watcher assaulters in Wales do not dispose us to confidence in all our juries for cases of this kind.

There are many things in the Civil Service that demand immediate and thorough reform. One of these is the irregularity with which examinations are held. For example, it is eighteen months since the women clerks had an opportunity of trying for entry into the Service. The custom previously was to hold two examinations in the year, and this delay has been causing very great disappointment. It is well known that girls undergo special preparation for entrance to the Civil Service, and the limit in regard to age is very strictly adhered to. A number of young women will be thrown out altogether. They reasonably calculated on coming forward for examination before the limit of age was reached, and now they will be too old. This seems to point to extremely bad business management on the part of those

who are responsible for these arrangements, and certainly such a muddle does not make for the efficiency of the Civil Service.

Municipal trading has taken a new form at Torquay, where the Town Council has successfully carried out an experiment in sheep-farming. It possesses some two thousand acres of land around the reservoirs at Dartmoor, and at the suggestion of someone in the council 190 sheep were bought about a year ago to graze the land. The cost was £243. Afterwards 112 of them were sold in the market for £226, and there are remaining 151 sheep and lambs, valued at £335 12s. The council claims, therefore, that the experiment has been a profitable one, and shows a credit balance of £250. In consequence the Town Council is going in for sheep-farming on a still more extensive scale, and if they had land enough and wool were to rise in value, as we hope it will, the people might be relieved of all rates and taxes by the revenue from the town flock. But what will those say who have been agitating against municipal trading? We fancy that they will, in the first place, be inclined to go more into the details of this alluring balance-sheet.

Humanitarianism does not invariably command sympathy, but few will refuse to give it to the agitation for prohibiting the skinning of goats alive in Bengal. Unfortunately there is no doubt in regard to the fact. Mr. J. Hare, Chief Secretary of the Government of Bengal, has officially stated that while the flaying of goats alive cannot be described as a common occurrence, it is undoubtedly done from time to time. His consolation is that the practice is a decreasing one, as the temptation to skin the goats alive is growing less, because traders are refusing to give more for the skins so treated. It seems, however, to be a case for the stern application of European law. We know very well that there are practices that go on in India repugnant to us, which have some justification in the religion or superstition of the natives; but here the object seems to be merely pecuniary, and there does not appear to be any good reason for not dealing with the offence with a strong hand.

The advance of civilisation in Japan can no longer be considered a matter of doubt, since it has now developed a woman question, and a very serious question it is. The Japs have a custom which really involves nothing less than a system of slavery. Ignorant young girls are hired in the country and induced to make long contracts at a wage which works out at something like 3d. a day. Practically they are slaves shut out from the rest of the world, and too often exposed to the tyranny of masters who are devoid of scruple. But through the action of the Press and the active measures taken by one or two of the stronger firms, these practices have been exposed to the light of day, and that in a country so progressive as Japan may be accepted as the first step towards a thorough reform. The civilisation of a country can always be very fairly judged by the position allotted to its women. If they are kept in a state of thraldom and debasement, refinement can only be an outward veneer, and not the real thing.

One of the most extraordinary cases of insanity that we ever heard of is reported from Chicago. A dentist suddenly went mad and began extracting people's teeth in a reckless and furious manner. Four men who were lying in a state of intoxication had their molars whipped out. Then the madman rushed into the street, and flung down an old man he met and pulled out the only two teeth in his head. Luckily for the rest of the population, his next proceeding was to make an attempt upon the teeth of a navvy, who promptly put his knee into the pit of the dentist's stomach, bringing his wild career to an abrupt conclusion; but the incident illustrates some of the dangers of civilisation. Suppose a barber with his razor at someone's throat were to go suddenly insane? Imagination boggles at the answer.

The extraordinary crime which has occupied so much space in the newspapers of the last few days has attracted attention to the county of Essex. Although so near London, it is curious how little it is known to the inhabitants of the metropolis. Parts of it, in fact, are London, or at least in the suburbs, but other districts are as wild and might be as far removed from civilisation as the most northerly part of the Empire. Many hamlets and farms are from six to eight miles from a station, and as for a long period of years very little money has been available for spending on improvements, these places are now very much what they were in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even the cyclist does not explore them to any great extent, because the best roads are the main highways and the lanes make rather rough riding. The people themselves are curiously ignorant of all that is outside their own parish, and it is not uncommon to meet an ancient rustic who never in the course of his or her life has been in London.

The chances of an influx of pastoral or agricultural English to the Transvaal improve. Lord Lovat, whose scouts, raised from stalkers and gillies of the Highlands, were said to have been literally the eyes of the army whenever a column was fortunate enough to have some of them attached to it, has purchased a large estate in the Ladybrand district. It is mainly pastoral, but there are magnificent corn-lands in the neighbourhood also, which was the granary of the Boers of that side of the colony during the war. A number of shorthorns from Lord Lovat's herd at Beaufort have been sent up, and everything points to the establishment of a progressive ranch. In the accounts of the war published by the Boers themselves, as, for instance, in Mr. Kestell's recent book, nothing is more striking than the enormous quantity of cattle and sheep remaining after two years of war, and in spite of the old-fashioned careless treatment of stock by the Boers. The Australians were unanimous in saying

that their bush was nothing compared to the veldt for pasturing cattle. In a short time the English and Colonials may equal the Boers in numbers, even in the rural districts.

The death of Mr. C. G. Leland at Florence will be deplored by all those interested in folklore, and especially in that connected with the gipsies. No one since George Borrow, who lived among them and passed as a Romany, has become so intimate with these strange people or contributed so much interesting information concerning them as Mr. Leland. And now that gipsies are gradually either becoming civilised, or being driven away from England, everything that can be learnt concerning them increases in value. Mr. Leland learnt their language, and was familiar with their strange customs, and the pathos and humour and much of the Freemasonry of their mysterious lives.

LINDISFARNE.



A. H. Robinson.

"ITS STYLE
VARIES FROM CONTINENT TO ISLE."

Copyright

"For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandalled feet the trace."

FROM many points of view the long wet sands which are shown in our pictures are remarkable. In the eyes of the photographer they have this peculiarity: that they form almost the only place on the East Coast where exquisite marine sunsets can be seen. Our previous pictures of a similar nature have all been from the West of England, where the sun, as it were, drops into the sea. Here he falls behind the Cheviots, which, however, are so far away in the distance as not to interfere with the effect on the sands. They are indicated, and that is all, in the photograph, but with the eye you may see the green round summits and the slopes where Douglas and Percy hunted in days before the battle of Otterburn. But Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, itself is a place full of old and pensive associations. The beautiful name Lindisfarne, by the by, may be broken into Lindis or Lowe, the name of the little stream which flows through the Haggerston Estate and finds its

mouth in the sands, and farne, a place. Holy Island is a phrase that was frequently used in the early Middle Ages to denote one of the many islands on the fringe of our coast where a saint or brotherhood had a sanctuary.

Lindisfarne is still suggestive of those old times. Indeed, it has changed but little, even though the castle perched on the top of the rock is not now inhabited and the priory is in ruins. The passage across those long sands, which can only be accomplished when the tide is back, has proved to be a deterrent to the builder of red villas and to the seaside tourist. Therefore, no smart boarding-houses and no brand-new hotels have risen to change the old-world atmosphere of the place. Most of the houses are still ordinary cottages, and the two places of entertainment aspire to be no more than village inns. All the rest remains as before, though the wide sea, instead of the shallop in which St. Columba made his voyages, now bears huge steamers with clouds of smoke blowing behind their black funnels. Only the largest ship makes so little difference to the sea that it is scarcely worth mentioning. The rocks and the white waves, the seagulls and the cormorants, are just as they were when St. Cuthbert used to say his orisons here. Indeed, the place still has a certain odour of sanctity. It is so easy to understand that men who had turned their backs on



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"THE PILGRIMS TO THE SHRINE FIND WAY."

Copyright.

the world would find here a retreat and a solitude to give them opportunity for that searching of the spirit which they thought necessary for salvation.

In the neighbourhood, that is to say on the Farne Islands, you may still find the eider ducks that the holy saint loved, and which in consequence were called St. Cuthbert's hens. It is pleasant to fancy him breaking away from his meditations to listen to the wild screams of the seafowl, and, perhaps, throwing them scraps from the coarse food on which he lived. Easy, too, is it to imagine the long strings of pilgrims who, when his bones were reposing in Durham Cathedral, still visited the place where he had prayed and meditated so often. It was an inspiration of Scott, although it illustrated the darker side of the Catholic faith, to make this the scene of the death of that frail but lovable heroine of



A. H. Robinson.

O'ER THE SANDS.

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"Marmion," Constance de Beverley "injured Constance," as the knight called her when he lay sore wounded on a slope of Flodden. That fatal field, still dark with its crown of oaks, may almost be said to overlook Holy Island, though at least fourteen miles away. St. Cuthbert's beads, as the pretty little shells were called, still are gathered on the island by the fisher girls and boys returning from school, and when amongst them one could imagine one's self carried back to the time of the Venerable Bede and the other monks who made Holy Island a great seat of English learning. But probably it would be difficult for anybody but a dreamer of dreams to realise all this from a casual visit to Holy Island. It is true you may still wade across those sands, following the direction indicated by the posts as seen in our photograph; and were one caught by the tide, the crows' nests that are placed at intervals might serve as a place of refuge; but

unfortunately for the world he died before the results of his labour were in a fit state to be presented to the public, and as far as we know a little popular handbook contains the only attempt ever made to gather and condense the many facts and traditions, military and ecclesiastical, into one volume. They are now scattered through a hundred dusty tomes.

ON THE GREEN.

EVERY now and again the fact is brought to our notice with an unpleasant shock that even our harmless, necessary game of golf is not without its element of danger. The most recent illustration is given by the deplorable accident on a green near Uxbridge, where



A. H. Robinson.

"THE WAVES EFFACE
OF STAVES AND SANDALLED FEET THE TRACE."

Copyright

as a rule the sands are crossed in some sort of wheeled vehicle, which may be obtained either at the charming little town of Belford or the equally sleepy Berwick-on-Tweed. If not, then one has to trust to one of the various tradesmen's carts that go to and fro carrying merchandise to the islanders. They must move quickly, for these are shifting sands, and wheels at rest are very often apt to sink into them. Accidents have happened, but they have been few and far between. We know of none that has been at all serious during the last fifteen or sixteen years.

The student of antiquities will find much to interest him in the little island, and much of the ground still remains virgin. It is true that the late Sir William Crossman devoted much time to the solution of the many problems it presents, but

a boy was killed by a golf ball striking him behind the ear. One would not care to refer to a subject so painful if it were not in the hope that it may serve as a warning of the necessity of the greatest caution in driving on a crowded green. It is not meant to imply that any lack of due caution was the occasion of the last accident. There are greens—North Berwick in the season is a striking illustration—where the populace, whether engaged in golf or otherwise, run about across the line of fire in a heedless way that makes it only extraordinary that people are not hit more often. On such a green, if no risks at all were taken one would never get round the course in a day. But at least on a links like North Berwick every loiterer knows his or her peril. This is not always the case in the South. Some of the loiterers show a most guileless ignorance of the game of golf, and from every point of view it behoves us to pay them all consideration, including the purely selfish viewpoint that if a passer-by is hit, even much less severely than in the sad instance that we have taken for the text of this homily, it is sufficient

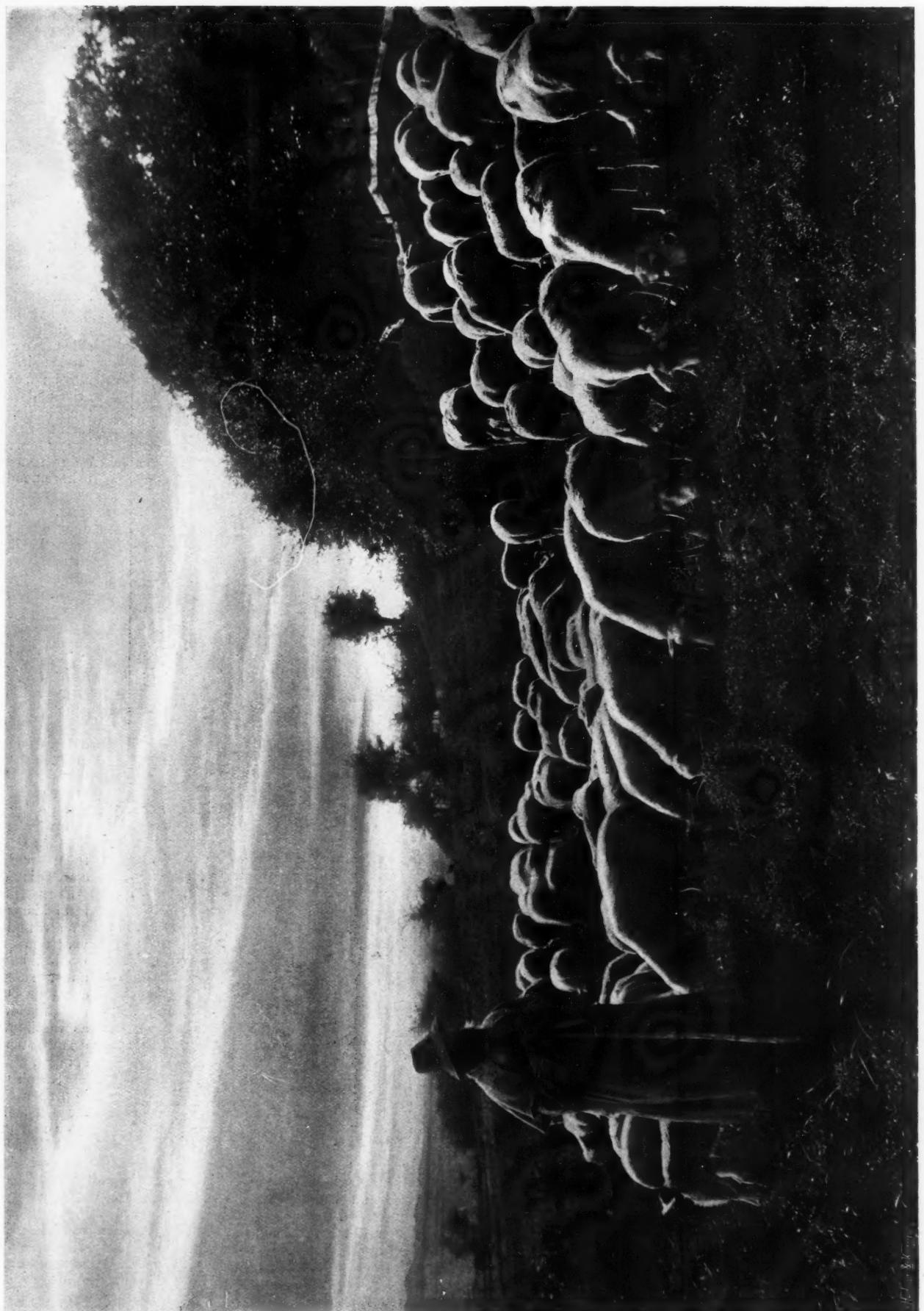
to render the game extremely unpopular in the neighbourhood of its occurrence, and possibly, if the course be on a public common, to result in the eviction of the golfer altogether. These accidents, at all events, serve us with a warning of the need of letting so-called passers-by pass far enough to be beyond all danger.

There is golfing congestion in other places than in the great centres on the East Coast of Scotland, and at other times than high summer and autumn. If a man wants to admire congestion in the most acute stage, he may come to Biarritz in spring, and may study it as successfully as in Scotland itself. A three hours' round is not exceptional. But no one really minds, though everybody grumbles. In the South of France one does not want to take golf, or life, too seriously. The local caddies are ingenious in swindling their own masters' balls to the front in the trough wherein balls are set to take starting-places; but they have been checkmated by the invention of a small table with numbered holes for the balls, and the legend: "Gadies are forbidden."

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COUNTRY LIFE.

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A PASTURE IN THE SUNSET.

M. Emil Frechon.

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ta place balls nere." There is a distinct appropriateness in this legend to the polyglot Babel on the tee, where the caddie talks in his patois, the Englishman explains in French to the Frenchman, and the Frenchman answers in English to the Englishman. It would be a kind of silent rebuke and protest if perfect purity in any tongue were observed in this striking legend. It is worth a little analysis—"Cadies," with one "d," in compliment to the

derivation from the French "cadet"; "ares," with an "s," to signify that it is governed by the plural "cadies"; "forbiden" seems quite *sui generis*; but "ta" is obviously a recognition of the Scottish character of the game; and as for "nere," it is clearly a better and more inclusive word than the mere "here," that was no doubt intended, since it extends the "forbiden" sphere considerably.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

SHEPHERDESSING.

BETWEEN the facts and the fancies of rural life there has always been a wide difference. There can be few of those who are most deeply immersed in the whirl and fever of city life who have not at times wished they could get away from its feverish pleasures and intense business to the simplicity and quiet of the fields. To a man sitting in an office, with his head full of important affairs, and his mind worried with anxieties, there comes at times a vision of simple peasant life that may not be at all like reality, but has an unspeakable charm. It is the way of humanity to think most of what is past or what is to come. Looking back from middle age to childhood, how exquisite and delightful the days seem to have been. No pleasure of later life seems to have equalled that which we gained from the early sports and pastimes. No sun is quite so beautiful as that which used to shine then, and even the rains and storms had a certain charm that does not linger. Of course it never was so in reality. Heartily as we might enjoy the sports of early youth, most of us longed to be grown up, and believed that we never could know what life was until we had come to mature age. Indeed, there are very few people who are content to live in the present. Even if we grudge the loss of time, we are continually looking forward to some joy that is waiting for us. And of all rural crafts, that of the keeper of sheep has most frequently been the object of vain imaginings.

It might be plausibly argued that this is due to our Bible, where the Good Shepherd symbolises all that is noblest and best, were it not for the fact that before the Christian era, and in lands where Judaism was not known, the same longing for pastoral life was expressed. Most of us know that beautiful poem of Moschus, which has been so admirably translated by Mr. Andrew Lang, where the shepherd is represented as doing nothing but sitting in the shade of the pine trees, blowing his pipe and lulling his sorrow to sleep. It gives the keynote to almost all subsequent pictures of a similar life. The painter or poet, when he sits down to conjure up a vision of country life,

in most cases altogether forgets the hard facts, and exaggerates those beauties that perhaps are less visible to those nearest them. He sees the wistful moonlight on lake and meadow, producing elfin shades in the woodland; he sees the dawn, rosy-fingered, creeping up the misty mountain-top, and gradually spreading a glory of sunlight on rock and valley; he sees the red clouds of evening floating forth from the setting sun like great golden wings, and still evening coming on and clothing all things in its sober mantle.

The happy swains who live in this magical atmosphere are wholly suited to it. They may have carried grief and care to the fields, but their sorrow is no longer real; it is only something to be remembered as a motive for a song. Watteau undoubtedly expressed all this better than almost any other artist. His rustic pictures scarcely pretend to show anything real; they are only dreams of what ideal rustic life should be. The shepherd, with his bare-footed maid, reclines under an umbrageous tree, and a pensive sheep looks with mild anxiety at them and the conventional dog, which stares from his corner. The actual conversation that would take place under such circumstances in real life would, as we know, be commonplace enough.

Shepherdessing, as a calling for women, has gone out of fashion, but there are

still hundreds of women who earn their livelihood in the fields, and the shepherd is as much to the fore as ever he was. But when he talks to these girls, it is in the manner of the rustics in the Forest of Arden; his discourse, one may be certain, would run on fat sheep and pastures, and if he had a share in the flock, on the price of wool and mutton. But one can see that the reclining swain in the picture is not interested in these matters. He is giving flowers to his lady-love, and probably discoursing of her bright eyes and the twinkling stars that they resemble. She has the air of making a repartee, which one is quite sure, from her face, would be clever and bright, but tender also. It is there that the painter justifies himself and proves the excellence of his art, for he has given us a most charming face, that has in it kindness without sentimentality, and wit devoid of cruelty.



THE SHEPHERD MAIDEN.
(After Watteau.)



THE GRAPE SELLER.

(After Watteau)

We can easily imagine that his subjects were two good and happy young people from the city, who had gone out to the country for the special purpose of posing as shepherd and shepherdess, while, if one were quite frank, it would be added that the sheep and dog might have been drawn from stuffed specimens. Yet in another of the pictures, where one who is little more than a boy is sporting with Amaryllis in the shade, the sheep and the goat are very beautifully painted, and even the lion and the fountain have a great deal of character.

But how different are the people of actual life. There the keeper of sheep is inured to hardship and poverty from childhood. They make their marks on brown face and horny hand. In that class the struggle to sustain life is so hard that it causes the sense of enjoyment to come near atrophy, not that it is really dead either, for people who live continually in the open air almost unconsciously imbibe a love of it. They do not talk about the beauty of starlight and moonshine, but if they have spent youth and early maturity in that wild free way, it becomes almost impossible for them to exist in the confined and feverish atmosphere of town. It is only the leisured and cultivated who are able to analyse and describe the sensations produced by a love of Nature and the kindredship that it establishes between humanity and all that lives and all that does not live in the universe. We call it pantheism in the mouth of a philosopher, or of a poet, such as Wordsworth was. But whatever we call it, there is no doubt of the fact that between the mind of man and of things upon the earth animate and inanimate there is a sympathy, which can be cultivated till it is the greatest of all our passions. To try to give the ultimate reason for this would be to set forth a system of philosophy, since it carries us back to the conclusion that mind and matter resolved to their simplest elements must be one, and that uniformity

is the keynote to the arrangement of the universe. But in this speculation we are travelling far away from Arcadia, the pleasant happy dream-world where there is no curse of labour, no anxiety, and no grief, but shepherds and shepherdesses are ever young and amorous, and go piping and dancing without a thought as to the calamities incidental to the ordinary life's pilgrimage.

Along with the pictures by Watteau we show some photographs dealing with a kindred theme. Here a high-born maiden, whom many of our readers will recognise, is without affectation playing at being a dairymaid; that she has often done so before is quite apparent from the way in which she is at home with her cows and the cows are at home with her. Incidentally it may be pointed out how things have changed of late. The girl of to-day in her most poetic moments would scarcely dream of becoming a keeper of sheep, since that vocation has gone out



WITH AMARYLLIS IN THE SHADE.

(After Watteau)

of fashion, but if it came into her head to dream that she would like to exchange her high station and the pleasures that go with it for a rural life, she would naturally think of being a milkmaid.

Around the dairy, far more than the sheep-fold, are grouped the modern ideals of country life, and this shows that imagination always follows fact, even if it be at a distance. The modern dairy opens up a practical way for women to earn a livelihood. Hundreds of women depend upon it for their support, and in consequence fancy which transmutes all base metal into gold has painted for herself an ideal dairymaid, who pursues her calling in a kind of happy dream. In point of fact the work of a dairy is about as hard as anything a woman can do. Even milking cows, which has formed a subject of so many idyllic



A PENSIVE MOMENT.

(After Watteau)

pictures, is such a strain upon the wrist that in large dairies it has been found that women are not strong enough for it, while making butter and attending to the prosaic cleaning and scrubbing which are required for a clean dairy, are tasks that only a vigorous peasant is fit for.

But then the beauty of following a calling only in one's fancy is that all the disagreeables are blotted out from it. The washing and scrubbing get done without trouble. There is no weariness, no anxiety, and all flows on tranquilly and peacefully. This reflection does not at all apply to the charming part played by the young lady of our picture, it is only a moralisation upon it suggested by the contrast between Watteau's painting and the photographs of Mr. Reid.

APRIL . . . FOOLS' DAY.

"The birds all sing together,
Of a world still young—still young!"

HOWEVER worn and wrinkled may be old Time, springtime is always young. April, the month of opening buds, begins life with a frolic; she enters laughing. For ages her first day has been the signal for human mirth and fun and fooling. So world-wide and ancient a custom as that of April fooling must have had a reason and a beginning, but its origin is hard to find. It does not suffice us to be told that as March 25th used to be New Year's Day, April 1st was its octave, when its festivities culminated and ended; we crave for something more graphic and definite. With sundry differences and variations we trace the First of April fooling in many alien quarters of the globe. In France the April fool is called a *poisson d'Avril*, and in honour of the day the shops are filled with fish. In Scotland the April fool is called a "gowl," a word which I believe is Scotch for cuckoo. Taking a long leap into Hindustan, we find strange pranks and merry-makings at the Holi feasts, which begin, or perhaps I should say occur, on the last day of March, and at which there are many points of similarity between the behaviour of the natives and that of Western nations at about the same season.

There are sundry traditions concerning April Fools' Day that are more or less picturesque, but do not throw much light on the subject. We cannot believe that April fooling has arisen on account of the fickleness of April weather, nor because of the sending forth of the dove on the first day of the month by Noah, though it is true the dove was despatched upon a fruitless errand. Nor do we like to think it was to commemorate the mock-trial before the Crucifixion; it seems almost a sacrilege to connect the two, though we know how strangely fasts and feasts and festivals and anniversaries of past events become, by lapse of time and change of manners, perverted from their original meanings, even as the sacred play has degenerated into the grotesqueness of pantomime.

For the prettiest myth that has to do with April Fools' Day we must dive into the records of the ancient gods and goddesses, and conjure up a vision of fair Proserpine in the Elysian fields, as, stooping among the soft, fine blades of grass, she plucked and filled her lap with golden daffodils,

Pluto was so fascinated by this picture of beauty that he seized and carried the maiden off with him to the depths of the lower world. Ceres, the mother of Proserpine, distraught and seeking everywhere for her child, was mischievously deceived by Echo, who led her here, there, and everywhere, always to her disappointment, so that poor Ceres never again set eyes upon her darling, and the frolicsome daughter of the air was the first who ever



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

GOING A MILKING.

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made an "April fool." When London was a good deal younger than it is now, a favourite joke for April Fools' Day was to send country cousins to the Tower of London to see the lions washed. There are no lions kept there now, so the joke has lost its point, but so long as there is a nursery or a schoolroom left in England the first of April will always be hailed with joy as the time when a little practical joking and "fooling" will be condoned.

The neatly-put-up parcel will arrive, nothing but fold upon fold of paper, with perhaps a coffee-bean at the core—a bogus telegram—a mysterious visitor (one of the boys dressed up). The older people must join the laughter, even if the laugh be against themselves, no difficult matter in the merry sunshine of the budding spring, when—

"Proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything."

F. A. B.

IN THE GARDEN.

WATER-SIDE TREES AND SHRUBS.

AT this planting season many are considering the trees and shrubs for the water-side, river, stream, pond, or whatever the character of the places to be planted may be. A large number of trees and shrubs, and hardy plants as well, succeed either in the swampy ground at the extreme edge, or on the banks slightly above, where their roots can take advantage of the additional moisture. For large lakes with broad and bold outlines, and

probably large or small islands, many kinds are available, as on the raised portions of the islands almost all hardy trees will flourish, but where the soil is continually wet Poplars and Willows in particular are available. Willows are general favourites, and will grow not only in wet soils, but the slender wand-like, or in many cases pendulous, growths are best seen in this connection. Willows with coloured bark and the red-stemmed Dogwood make bright groups of colour in midwinter, and during a sunny day at that season the bark of *Salix vitellina* shines like burnished gold, in which one can detect a reddish tinge. Again, on the banks just above the water the hips of the Dog Rose, scarlet berries of the Guelder Rose, curiously tinted fruits of the Cotoneasters, and the orange berries of the Sea Buckthorn, all help to form an attractive winter picture. This last (the Sea Buckthorn) will also grow where the soil is quite moist. In planting small islands too many Poplars are a mistake. They grow so fast that their less vigorous neighbours are likely to suffer, while on large islands or roomy spaces it is such trees as Poplars that may be judiciously planted. The Lombardy Poplar, which owing to its columnar growth is one of the most distinct of our hardy trees, is very beautiful when not planted in too great numbers.

Of trees and shrubs for water-side planting the list given on the following page includes those that will thrive in swampy ground.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

"STEADY, BLOSSOM, STEADY!"

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TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WET PLACES.

Willows (Salix).—The list of Willows in cultivation is a long one, the following being the best: *Salix alba* (White Willow), quite a tree, remarkable for its beautiful silvery leaves; *S. babylonica* (Babylonian Weeping Willow); *S. purpurea*; *S. purpurea pendula* (American Weeping Willow); *S. Caprea* (Palm or Goat Willow); *S. Caprea pendula* (Kilmarnock Weeping Willow); *S. britzensis* (Cardinal Willow), with quite orange bark; *S. vitellina* (Golden Willow); *S. pentandra*; *S. daphnoides* (White-stemmed Willow); *S. fragilis* (Crack Willow); *S. fragilis basfordiana* (Red-barked Willow); and *S. hippophaefolia* (Sea Buckthorn-leaved Willow). *Populus alba* (White Poplar); *P. canadensis* (Canadian Poplar); *P. canadensis aurea* (Golden-leaved Poplar); *P. nigra* (Black Poplar); *P. nigra fastigata* (Lombardy Poplar); and *P. tremula* (the Aspen). *Alnus glutinosa* (Common Alder), with its numerous varieties, the cut-leaved and the golden-leaved forms being particularly striking; *Alnus incana* and varieties; and *Alnus serrulata*.

THE LILACS.

Very soon the heavy flower clusters of the Lilac will scent the garden, and we have been asked by more than one correspondent to name the most beautiful varieties in the different colourings. A selection of twelve single varieties would include the following, in order of merit: *Whites*, Marie Legraye and Alba grandiflora; *Blue or Bluish*, Cœrulea or Delphine, Duchesse de Mamours, Lindleyana or Dr. Lindley; *Reds or Purple Reds*, Souv. de L. Späth, Philemon, Rubra insignis, Camille de Rohan, Ville de Troyes; *Pinks*, Lovanensis and Schneelavine. This selection includes the finest varieties of all. Of the double-flowered Lilacs, the best are the

following, in order of merit: *Lavender and Blue*, Leon Simon, Renoncule, and Alphonse Lavallée (pale blue); *Pinks*, President Carnot, and M. de Dombasie; *Whites*, Mme. Abel Chatenay (the finest), Mme. Lemoine, and Casimir fils; *Reds*, President Grévy, Senator Volland, Comte H. de Choiseul, and Maxime Cornu.

A BUSY SEASON.

The gardener, and we use the term in its widest meaning, should be busily engaged every day. There are the Roses to think of pruning, flower and vegetable seeds to sow, hardy plants to put out in beds and borders—to divide if needful, the rock garden to attend to, and preparations to be made for summer bedding. This is the best season to cut Ivy back hard, clipping it close to the wall, with the reward of a fresh, clean, wholesome growth in early summer. Ragged Ivy or overgrown climbers spoil the most beautiful houses, and the good architect whose work is overrun with Virginian Creepers and Ivy deserves sympathy. When Hyacinth and Daffodil bulbs in pots have ceased flowering, let the foliage die down gradually, and after this stand them out in the open ground to ripen. It will not be wise to "force" them so to speak, again, but plant out the bulbs where they are likely to make a good display in future years. We have known many beautiful features in gardens created through this simple plan, and there is, of course, no waste. Where lawns are faulty make another sowing of seed, and it is time to remove the winter dressing. Well rake the grass so as to remove stones and twigs, which spoil the "cutter." It is still possible to plant trees and shrubs, and for the very choice and tender kinds protection from dry winds from north and east is essential.

"A TERR'BLE VOOLISH LITTLE MAID."—I.

BY M. E. FRANCIS.

THE cottage next door to Mrs. Cross had long been occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Frizzel; but that good couple had recently gone to live "Darchester-side," near their married daughter Susan. Their discarded dwelling, vacant for some little time, was taken by a respectable widow woman, named Chaffey, and on a certain autumn morning she entered into possession.

From under the green "shed" of his cart the carrier extracted a variety of goods and chattels, exciting keen interest in the mind of Mrs. Cross, who, with her nose flattened against the leaded panes of her bedroom window, watched the proceedings closely. The large articles of furniture had arrived on the previous day in a waggon—the wooden bedstead, so solid in construction and uncompromising in shape that its legs had hung over the edge; the oak settle and carved linen-chest at which Mrs. Cross had turned up her nose, deeming them "terr'ble old-fayshioned"; the "parlour suite" of painted wood, cushioned with brightly-coloured cretonne: couch, armchair, and three small chairs; the lot must have cost at least three pound ten, for Mrs. Cross had seen the like in the upholsterer's window at Branston. Her respect for the new-comer immediately increased, and this morning, as she squinted down at her from her attic, vainly endeavouring to see all round her at once, she was much impressed by her appearance.

Mrs. Chaffey was a spare woman of middle height, wearing a decent brown stuff gown and grey fringed shawl. Her black bonnet with its yellow flowers was quite "fayshional" in shape, and though her black kid gloves were unbuttoned, and had, moreover, grown somewhat grey about the fingertips, they nevertheless conveyed the idea of exceeding respectability.

"Quite a genteel sort o' body," commented Mrs. Cross, "and do seem to know what she be about; too," she added a moment later, as Mrs. Chaffey, having entered the house, presently emerged again, having changed her headgear for a gathered print sun-bonnet, bright pink in colour, and protected her dress by the addition of a large white apron.

Mrs. Cross screwed her head into the other angle of the window, and again squinted down.

"That's a feather bed," she observed as a large tied-up bundle was placed in the expectant arms of its owner, who clearly staggered beneath its weight. "Carrier did ought to carry it for she. Pillows next, and a basket—chaney most like. Fender, fire-irons, kettle, pots, and a pan or two—very small 'uns they be. 'Tis but a lone 'ooman, they d' say; she'll not want so much cookin'. Clock, hassock—"

The carrier's voice now interrupted the inventory: "This 'ere basket, mum; that do make the lot. I hope ye'll find all reg'lar, mum, and no damage done."

Mrs. Cross, who had been breathing hard in her excitement, was at this point constrained to polish the window with her apron; by the time the operation was concluded and her nose again applied, Mrs. Chaffey had taken out her purse, and was slowly counting out a certain number of coins into the carrier's hand. Mrs. Cross could not for the life of her see how many, but she observed that the man's face lengthened.

"Bain't there nothin' for luck?" he enquired. "I did take a deal o' trouble wi' them arnements and sich like."

"You've a-had what I did agree for," responded Mrs.

Chaffey, with dignity. Her voice was high and clear, and as she spoke she turned towards the cottage with a final air.

"I d' low she's a bit near," remarked Mrs. Cross, as she retired from the window, rubbing her nose pensively. "Poor Martha Frizzel! She was a good soul, she was—just about."

She stood a moment looking round the little attic chamber, but without seeing either the somewhat untidy bed, with its soiled patchwork quilt, or the washstand with its cracked jug, or the torn curtain pinned half across the window. She saw instead her former neighbour's shrewd, kindly face bending over a pot of well-stewed tea, or nodding briefly in response to sundry requests for the use of a bucket or the loan of a pan, and occasionally for the "advance" of a few "spuds."

"Mind you do bring 'em back," was all Mrs. Frizzel would say. Well, sometimes Mrs. Cross did bring them back, and sometimes Martha came and fetched them, but she never made a bit of fuss, and was always as kind and neighbourly as she could be.

Mrs. Chaffey must be getting a bit settled by this time, Mrs. Cross thought; she would just pop in and ask how she was getting on. She smoothed her rough hair with the palms of her hands, jerked down her sleeves, which she usually wore rolled up till dinner-time, not because she fatigued herself with over much work, but because it seemed somehow the proper thing to do of a morning; she twitched her apron straight, pinned over a gap in her bodice—Mrs. Cross was a great believer in the efficacy of pins, and rarely demeaned herself by using a needle and thread—and, finally, composing her features to an expression of polite and sympathetic interest, strolled leisurely downstairs, and into her neighbour's premises.

Mrs. Chaffey was standing by her table, busily unpacking china, but, as the other entered, remarking genially that she thought she'd just look in to see how Mrs. Chaffey liked her noo place, and if she could lend a hand anywhere, she came forward with a somewhat frosty smile, and set a chair for her.

"Sit down, won't ye?" she said. "I'm a bit busy; but there! it do do folks good to set a bit now and then."

"E-es, indeed, my dear," responded Mrs. Cross, enthusiastically; it was a sentiment she cordially endorsed. "Lard! if a body was to keep upon their legs from morn till night, churchyard 'ud be fuller at the year's end nor it needs to be. I be pure glad you've a-took this 'ere house," she added graciously. "I scarce expected as any respectable party 'ud come to it. The chimblly smokes," said Mrs. Cross, delightedly; "there! 'tis summat awful how it do smoke! And in the bedroom the rain and wind do fair beat in when a bit of a storm do come—'tis these 'ere queer little voaty winder-panes—rain comes through them so easy as anything. And the damp—there! Mrs. Frizzel, what lived here last, used to say many a time: 'Mrs. Cross, my dear,' she did use to say, 'the damp do seem to creep into my very bwones.' But I be pure glad to see you here, I'm sure," she summed up cheerfully; "and 'tis to be hoped as you'll find it comfortable."

Mrs. Chaffey's face, always somewhat plaintive in expression, had become more and more dismal as her neighbour proceeded, and she now heaved a deep sigh.

"I d' low 'twill do for I," she said gloomily. "I be a lone 'ooman, Mrs.—?"

She paused tentatively.

"Mrs. Cross be my name, my dear. E-es—Maria Cross. E-es, that be my name, my dear."

"Well, Mrs. Cross," resumed the new-comer, taking up her discourse in a voice tuned to just the same note of melancholy patience as before, "well, Mrs. Cross, as I was a-sayin', I be a lone 'ooman, a widow 'ooman, and I d' low I must look to be put upon. I bain't surprised to hear o' the house bein' damp and the chimbly smokin'; 'tis just what I mid have expected. And so I'll tell the agent when I do go for to pay my rent."

"It did ought to be considered in the rent," suggested Mrs. Cross.

"It did," agreed Mrs. Chaffey, and for a moment her eyes assumed an uncommonly wideawake expression. "I'll mention it to the gentleman; but I don't look for much satisfaction—I don't indeed, Mrs. Cross. A few shillin's back, maybe, and a new chimbly-pot, and tools put right on the roof, and a bit o' lead paper at back o' my bed. No more nor that, Mrs. Cross; they'll not do no more than that for a lone 'ooman."

"And didn't ye never ha' no childern?" enquired Mrs. Cross, with her head on one side. "It do seem mollancholy for ye to be left wi'out nobody to do a hand's turn for 'ee, poor soul."

Mrs. Chaffey shook her head with a portentous expression.

"A-h-h-h! Mrs. Cross, my dear," she said, "if there was sich a thing as a bit o' gratitood in this world I wouldn't be left wi'out a creature to do for me at my time o' life. Childern of my own I have not," said Mrs. Chaffey, with an air which indicated that the fact was very much to her credit; "but there's them livin' now as I've been more than a mother to, what have gone and left I in my ancient years as thankless!"

"Lard now!" ejaculated her neighbour, much interested; "ye don't tell I so, Mrs. Chaffey. Somebody what you've a-been very good to, I suppose, mum?"

"Good!" echoed Mrs. Chaffey. "Good's not the word for it, Mrs. Cross. 'Twas my first cousin's child—a poor little penniless maid what was brought up in a institootion—an orphan, my dear, as hadn't nobody in the world to look to. Well, when her time was up at the institootion, I come for'ard, and I says, 'I'll take her,' I says; 'she don't need to go to service,' I says. 'I'm her mother's cousin,' I told 'em, 'and she can come to live wi' I.'"

"And they were delighted, of course," suggested Mrs. Cross, as she paused impressively.

"No; if you'll believe me, they fair dathered I wi' axin' questions, and wantin' I to make promises and that. 'Why didn't I come and see the maid afore?' says they—as if 'twas likely, Mrs. Cross, as I'd go trapsin' off to a institootion to ax arter a maid as was too small to be any good to anybody. Then they did want I to give her wages—wages to a little bit of a thing as knowed nothin', and couldn't do nothin'! 'No,' I says, 'I'll give her a home,' I says, 'and I'll be a mother to her, and train her same as if she was my own child; but more than that I will not do.'"

"O' course not," agreed Mrs. Cross; "lucky enough she was to get sich a good offer, I think."

"And so you may," agreed the other, solemnly, "and so I did often say to the maid herself. 'You may think yourself lucky,' I did say to her often and often; 'many another,' I did tell her, 'ud put you out on the road when you do behave so foolish. But me! look at the patience I've had wi' you.' 'Twas a terrible foolish maid, Mrs. Cross; she was a bit silly in herself to begin with, and they institootions! Lard, they do never seem to teach a maid a thing as 'ull be a bit o' use to 'em. She could scrub a stone passage a mile long if she was put to it, but there, there bain't no passages in cottages, and she couldn't so much as peel a potato or wash a cabbage. Well, I did take so much pains wi' her as a mother could ha' done—I did make her find out for herself how to hold a knife, no matter how much she did cut herself. 'Find out,' I did say; and she did find out. And when grubs come up on the dish wi' the cabbages I'd cut off the bits as was nearest to 'em and put 'em on her plate; so she did soon learn, ye see. Sleep! That maid 'ud sleep many and many a cold morning arter I had pulled blankets off her—e-es, there she'd lay so fast as anything and never take a bit o' notice till I got a drop o' cold water—and that didn't always wake her up all to once. There, she was fair aggravatin'! When I did get her up at last, and got back to bed again, I couldn't get a wink o' sleep for thinkin' on't."

"Dear, to be sure! Well now!" commented Mrs. Cross, scratching her elbows appreciatively.

"E-es, indeed," continued Mrs. Chaffey, warming with her theme, "I did tell her many a time, 'you'll come to no good.' Ah, that I did, and she *didn't* come to no good either."

"Didn't she, though?" queried the other with interest. "Took up with a soldier, very like?"

"Nothing o' the kind. There weren't no soldiers anywhere near us. 'Twas another kind of a man altogether."

"A-h-h," groaned Mrs. Cross, sympathetically. "And I s'pose he wouldn't marry her, mum?"

"E-es, he married her, Mrs. Cross," responded the widow, in

a tone of dignified surprise. "E-es, he married her. Indeed he did."

"But there was carryin's on, I suppose?" suggested Mrs. Cross, respectfully.

Mrs. Chaffey fixed her with a stony stare.

"I'm not one as 'ud allow no carryin's on," she returned loftily. "When the man come and axed Jenny—that was her name—I says to her, 'not with my consent,' I says. Well, she took and got married wi'out it!"

"Lard ha' mercy me!" ejaculated the listener, seeing that she was expected to say something; "well, that was—" she hesitated. "I s'pose the man wasn't one as you'd ha' picked for her, Mrs. Chaffey? Maybe," she added darkly, "he wasn't in work?"

"He was in work," replied Mrs. Chaffey, solemnly, "reg'lar. Oh, e-es, he was in work."

Mrs. Cross was a good deal mystified, and being too uncertain of her ground to venture on a comment, contented herself with clicking her tongue and turning up her eyes.

"Tis a queer tale; 'tis indeed," resumed the widow; "but as I did often say to she arter she took the notion, 'Don't blame me, Jenny; what you're a-doin', you're a-do'in' wi' your eyes open. I've a-told ye plain,' I says; 'I've gied ye the best advice. Stay,' I says, 'where you're well off. You've a-got a good home,' I did tell her, 'and one what is a mother to ye. Don't ye go for to take up wi' this 'ere stranger.'"

"Ah," interrupted Mrs. Cross, beginning to think she at last saw daylight, "he was a stranger, was he?"

"He was a man what come to the door," returned the other impressively, "what come to the door like any tramp. I did take en to be a tramp first off."

"Oh, and he wasn't a tramp arter all, then?" put in her neighbour, slightly disappointed.

"He *mid* ha' been one," resumed the narrator, with a dignified wave of the hand, intended to discourage further unnecessary and frivolous questions. "I'm willing to tell 'ee about it, Mrs. Cross, if you be willing to listen. 'Twas a Sunday of all days. We'd ha' been pretty busy till dinner-time. I'd got Jenny up soon arter four to get through wi' cleanin' up—I'm always one what likes to have the place reg'lar perfect, ye know—and by the time I come down for breakfast she'd a got everything straight. Well, her an' me fell out—she did want, if ye please, to go to church wi' I—so I says to her, 'Who's to get dinner, then? Be I to wait on you?' says I. 'No,' I says, 'you stay at home and do your dooty, and you can go to the chilidren's service in the afternoon if you behave well,' I says. Well, but she wouldn't hear reason; I did leave her cryin' like a child.

"I were a bit late comin' back, chattin' to this one and that one, an' when I got in, what did I see but a strange man by the fire. Ye could ha' knocked I down wi' a feather. I did jist drap in the first chair I come to, and p'int that way wi' my finger. I couldn't get out a word."

"Please ye, ma'am," says Jenny—(I wouldn't have her callin' I Cousin Maria, d'yee see, a little maid same as her out of a institootion; she did offer to call I so once or twice, but I soon checked her)—"Please ye, ma'am," she says, "this 'ere poor chap was so terr'ble cold; froze up he was, he'd ha' been walkin' ten mile an' more in the snow; and when he axed I to let en in to warm hisself a bit I didn't think you'd object."

"You didn't think I'd object," says I. "You little good-for-nothing hussy! We might ha' been robbed an' murdered for all you care."

"The man turned round laughin' as impudent as ye like. He was a Irishman, Mrs. Cross—I could tell it the very minute I clapped eyes on his face, afore he so much as opened his mouth, and when he did begin to speak, Lard ha' mercy me! I never did hear sich languidge."

"Swearin' an' that?" questioned Mrs. Cross, with her head on one side.

"Oh, no, nothin' o' that sort, but sich a queer, ignorant fayshion o' talkin'. 'The top o' the mornin' to ye, ma'am,' says he. 'Is it murtherer ye're talkin' of? Sure, how I could be after murtherin' ye when ye weren't here?' he says. 'Don't ye be afraid,' he went on—I can't really remember his queer talk, but he said he had come over harvestin', an' then got laid up wi' a fever, an' was a long time in hospital, and now, he said, he was on his way to see a friend what had been in the hospital at the same time, and after that he had the promise of work.

"A reg'lar cock-and-bull story. I didn't believe a word on't. I did tell en so."

"Why be ye a-trapsin' the roads, then?" says I, "if you've a-been invited to stay with a friend?"

"I missed my road," says he. "I took the wrong turn; I shan't get there till night, now," he says. "I'm a bit weak still, with bein' sick so long, and it'll take me all my time to get there."

"You'd best be startin', then," says I, p'intin' to the door. Then, if ye'll believe it, that little impudent maid ups and interferes.

"Oh, ma'am," she says, "let him bide and eat a bit o'

dinner wi' us. I'm sure he's a respectable man, and it's Sunday and all. And there's more dinner nor we can eat.'

"Well, I could ha' shook her. 'I'll thank ye, Jenny Meadoway, to mind your own business,' I says. 'A little chit like you, what's kept for charity. Bain't it enough,' I says, 'to be beholden to I for every bit you do put into your own mouth wi'out wantin' to waste the food what don't belong to ye on good-for-nothin' tramps and idlers?' I says.

"Then the man gets up.

"That'll do, ma'am,' he says. 'I wouldn't touch bite or sup o' yours,' he says, 'for fear it 'ud stick in my throat. Goodbye, my dear,' he says to Jenny, 'an' blessin's on your pretty face and your kind heart. Maybe better times 'ull be comin' for you as well as for me,' he says."

"Ah," put in Mrs. Cross, excitedly, "he had summat in his mind about her, you mid be sure."

Mrs. Chafley threw out a warning hand once more, and pursued her narrative.

(To be continued.)

THE OLD ENGLISH MASTIFF.

IT is never a pleasant task to write about the fortunes of a decaying race; still less does it become a congenial duty when the race concerned happens to be a breed of dog which formerly possessed a world-wide repute, though of late it has dwindled into more than comparative obscurity, owing to the fact that British dog-lovers have neglected it by bestowing their patronage upon foreign varieties. This, however, has been the fate of the old English mastiff, a breed of which our ancestors were justly proud, and which, together with the bulldog, carried the fame of British dogs throughout every quarter of the civilised world. Nor is there the slightest reason, but very much the contrary, why the mastiff should have been discarded thus, as, in the first place, his just claims to recognition, both as a guardian to his master and to houses, and as a companion to mankind, are infinitely superior to those of the Continental varieties of mushroom growth which have supplanted him in the affections of British breeders, whilst, so far as appearance goes, his foreign rivals are assuredly not his superior in any respect.

On the score of antiquity, so far, at all events, as these islands are concerned, the mastiff need only yield place to the greyhound, as doubtless his progenitor was the ancient mastive or bandogge, from which the bulldog likewise originated; indeed, there appears to be reasonable grounds for the belief which is entertained by many people that the two great British breeds not only sprang from the same root, but were formerly identical with each other, the differences in their appearance which at present exist being simply the result of the dog-owners of generations long gone by having bred with different objects before them. Whether this is the case or not is, however, a matter which can scarcely be argued out within the limits of the present article; but the fact remains that the antiquity of the mastiff is undisputed, and that in more lawless times a dog of this breed was regarded as an indispensable protection for his owner's person and home. There is plenty of evidence, too, to show that the

mastiff was utilised for the purposes of sport in olden times, his propensity for hunting deer being borne eloquent testimony to by the earlier forestry laws, which enacted that when dogs of this breed happened to be kept in habitations situated near the Royal hunting grounds, they should be crippled by having several of their toes removed in order to render it impossible for them to interfere with the Sovereign's deer.

It is not, however, necessary, nor is it possible here, to expatiate upon the ancient history of the mastiff; but a reference to the position which he occupied some thirty years ago in the canine social scale, and the low estate to which he has now fallen, may possibly be to the advantage of the breed, as haply it might be the means of inspiring some patriotic Britons to render his merits tardy justice. In the later sixties and almost all through the seventies, there were giants in the mastiff world, as during that period the kennels of such breeders as Miss Hales of Lyme Hall, Miss Aglionby, the Rev. W. J. Mellor, Mr. Luker, Mr. Edgar Hanbury, Dr. Forbes Winslow, Mr. Harris, and other enthusiasts were tenanted by a succession of magnificent representatives of the breed. Now

the really good specimens of the mastiff that could be found in the course of a diligent search throughout the length and breadth of the land can almost be counted on the fingers of one hand, whilst so far as dog shows are concerned the encouragement which these institutions have held out to foreign breeds has resulted in the practical disappearance of the mastiff from the exhibition ring. It is almost impossible, however, to believe that all the old blood contained in the kennels referred to above, and in others, can have been entirely obliterated by the demoralising taste for encouraging Continental varieties at the expense of our own, and therefore maybe there are some typical specimens of the old English race hidden away in remote districts, where their value is unappreciated.

The unearthing of these would bring joy to the hearts of the select, and, it is to be feared, diminishing band of patriotic enthusiasts who remain firm in

T. Fall.

CHAMPION MOSTON BLACK.

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CHAMPION MARKSMAN.

their allegiance to the mastiff, and whose spirits would be raised by any addition to their ranks or new blood to their kennels.

So far as his appearance goes, the chief points of the mastiff may be summarised as follows: Skull very great and massive, flat on the top and broad between the ears, which should be small for the size of the dog and lie flat against the sides of the head. The muzzle is, as it were, upon a lower level than the skull; it should be very massive and broad at the nose, not too long, and well filled up under the eyes, which ought to be small, rather sunken, and of a deep hazel colour, a yellow eye being a great disfigurement to a dog of this breed. The jaws must be very powerful, any disposition towards snipeyness being a decided fault, and the teeth large, strong, and as level as possible, though almost every mastiff is under-shot more or less. The general expression of countenance is disposed to be sour, for it must be remembered that the mastiff belongs to a rather combative variety of the canine race; the neck is thick and powerful, the shoulders are muscular and nicely sloped, the chest is wide and well let down behind the fore legs, whilst the latter must be dead straight and as heavy in bone as possible, with big compact feet. The body is rather long, but the more powerful the back the better, and the loins should be well ribbed up, with every indication of strength about them. The quarters, too, should display evidence of great power, the hocks slightly bent, but never turned inwards, whilst the tail, which is usually carried down, ought to be long and coarse. The coat is short, rather inclined to be fine to the touch, yet dense enough to keep out the weather, whilst the colours are either fawn with a black muzzle and ears or else brindle. Of these the fawns used to be by far the most numerous, scarcely a good brindle being seen, with the exception of Mr. Banbury's Wolsey, a remarkably good specimen of his day. Of late, however, the position has been certainly the reverse, a fine fawn being now almost as uncommon as the brindles were thirty years ago.

Of the accompanying illustrations of celebrated modern mastiffs, no fewer than four are the property of Mr. Robert Leadbetter of Haslemere, Bucks, and these have accounted between them for leading prizes at all the principal shows, including several championships, Mr. Leadbetter's kennel of mastiffs being by far the strongest in the county at the present time. The fifth illustration represents Mr. Luke Crabtree's Champion Moston Black, likewise a famous winner, whose enormous skull and massive muzzle are extremely well depicted in the photograph, which is an admirable likeness of a famous dog. Mr. Leadbetter's Hollands Black, a Dutch-bred specimen of the breed, likewise shows up well in these respects, the three-quarter view of his muzzle showing off his depth of face and broad jaws to

perfection. The profile of Marksman displays the drop from the skull to the muzzle extremely well, but it does not do the dog full justice, as it makes him appear to fall away too much under and in front of the eyes, but his depth of face is well portrayed. The skull of Marcella is exceptionally massive when her sex is considered, but she appears in the photograph to be rather long in the face. So far as can be seen from their photographs, the necks of Moston Black, Marcella, and Ja Ja show up best, as that of Marksman appears too slender, the impression being heightened by the tightness of his collar. All of them have good ears with the exception of Ja Ja, which seem too large; but she is beautifully let down behind the forearms, as is Marcella, and to a still greater extent Hollands Black. Marksman shows up well at the loins, as do Hollands Black and Marcella, Ja Ja appearing a little tucked up, whilst to judge from the photographs it would appear



Findlow.

CHAMPION MARCELLA.

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that the best quarters are those of Marcella and Hollands Black. Both of these animals are clearly exceptionally heavy in bone, whilst the feet and the carriage and texture and length of the tail of Marksman are excellently represented, being characteristic of the best mastiff type. We may remind our readers, however, that in drawing the above comparisons we are simply criticising the dogs as they appear in the illustrations, not with the desire of arriving at a conclusion of their actual merits as mastiffs, but in the hope that our remarks may render it easier to our readers to study for themselves the points of living mastiffs.

FROGS.

THE common brown frog, which is abundant in most parts of Britain, can hardly claim to be considered in the light of a domestic animal, though he is seen at his best when he takes up his abode in the neighbourhood of human beings, that is, in gardens or shrubberies adjoining the house. Most persons are inspired with repulsion at the sight of a frog, all practically regard him as a singularly uninteresting creature; yet the frog in folk-lore, in heraldry, and in medicine even, has a history. In the parish church of Boxsted, Suffolk, there is a large marble monument comprising the life-size effigy of a man-in-armour, his head bare, and his face adorned with moustaches and a tuft upon his chin, while from his right ear hangs a gold frog. This effigy represents Sir John Poley, of Wrongay, Knight, who died in 1638, aged upwards of eighty, having fought much abroad under Henry IV. of France, Christian, King of Denmark, and for his own Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, against the Spaniards. Further, there is said to be a family portrait of Sir John, showing the same curious ear ornament. Another instance of this mysterious symbol may be found in the parish church of Melton Mowbray, where there is a stone effigy of a cross-legged knight of the thirteenth century, fully armed, the point of his sword resting on a little stone frog, which must have been introduced to denote something. In either case, what is the origin of so singular a badge? Where the Poley family are concerned, there is no tradition to account for it, but a far-fetched suggestion is to the effect that Sir John's ear-frog may have been a "canting" device alluding to his name, since "Poley," or, rather, "Rowley Poley," is an ancient slang appellative of frogs, and as such has



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CHAMPION HOLLANDS BLACK.

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Findlow. OLD ENGLISH MASTIFF: CHAMPION JA JA.

been handed down in that well-known nursery rhyme that records the amorous adventures of "Rowley Poley," with his "gammon and spinach."

It is probable, however, that the symbol had some connection with the services which these two soldiers of fortune had rendered the Kings of France, that, in fact, it was the badge of some long-forgotten military order. It has almost been lost sight of that the original royal insignia of France were three gold frogs erect, saltant, and that these frogs were eventually changed by Clodevus—inspired by heaven—into the three fleurs-de-lis. However, the three gold frogs as they appeared in the old royal banner of France may be seen depicted in the ancient tapestry preserved in the cathedral of Rheims.

Then, again, it is not generally known that the British term of contempt for Frenchmen, "froggies," is derived from their ancient heraldic device, and not from their frog-eating propensities. As a matter of fact, it was a Frenchman himself, Nostradamus, who suggested the nickname, for he invented the generic term, "Jean Crapaud," and applied it to his fellow-countrymen, just as we speak collectively of Englishmen as "John Bull." But "Crapaud" is French for a toad; hence, it would appear that some confusion existed as to whether the armorial creatures were toads or frogs. However, among the French people themselves the Parisians were long known as *grenouilles*, frogs. "What will the frogs," that is, the people of Paris, "say?" was in 1791 a common Court saying at Versailles. There was a point in the pleasantries when Paris was a quagmire, called "Lute-tia," because the inhabitants did live like frogs in the midst of a sea of mud, and, when they took their walks abroad, were compelled to do a good bit of jumping.

At one period a certain section of the inhabitants of this country, namely, the fenmen, were termed frogs. The old monkish chroniclers gravely asserted, as a proof of the wisdom of Providence in adapting persons to their situations in life, that the fenmen were created with yellow bellies and web-feet, in order that they might be better fitted for their amphibious existence. Lord Macaulay, describing the condition of the fenmen at the latter part of the sixteenth century, says that they were "a half-savage population, known by the name of 'breedlings,' who led an amphibious life." When the Queen's Prize at Wimbledon was won in 1885 by Sergeant Bulmer, 2nd Lincoln, his victory was hailed by his local supporters with the cry "Well done, yellow belly!" This was in allusion to his being a Lincolnshire man, and therefore supposed to possess a frog-like nature.

We have already alluded to the time-honoured taunt which the Englishman hurls at the Frenchman's head, because the latter considers the edible frog a great delicacy, which it is, being in flavour and tenderness comparable to chicken.

But in this country the common brown frog, from time immemorial, has been taken medicinally for certain stomach diseases—notably, pyrosis, or water-brash, and, what is more, eaten alive. The story is told of a Scotch farmer who noticed one of his harvest hands, a young girl, pick up a frog, hold it by the two hinder feet, and then bolt it down her throat without any seeming repugnance. When he asked her why she had swallowed it, she replied that there was "naething better than a paddock for reddin' the puddins." This revolting practice, in fact, appears to have been quite common in the North among the labouring classes, who believed it to be an infallible remedy when the stomach required purging. In Wiltshire, at the present day, we understand, it is a remedy administered to cows afflicted with a cessation of chewing the cud, while in North Lincolnshire the sore mouth, with which very young

children are often troubled, is called the "frog," and it is still a common practice with mothers to take a live frog by its hind legs and allow it to sprawl about the mouth of a child so afflicted as a cure.

The old harvest custom, known as "cutting the frog," had no cruel import. Here "frog" was a variation of "frock," as it is still applied to the fastening of the front of a coat, often made ornamental by the use of embroidery or braiding or "frogging." "Cutting the frog" referred to the cutting of the stalks of the last corn reaped which had been plaited together, and the operation was accomplished by throwing at the "frog," that is, at the plaiting, a sickle held by its point. As the reapers changed places after each "drift," it was quite uncertain who would be the last man, and he it was who had to "cut the frog"; further, there was the chance of his failing, for to throw the sickle required no little skill, in which case he had to give way to a comrade. The farmer rewarded the man who did "cut the frog," thus signifying that the harvest was finished, with a bonus of beer and money.

There are innumerable instances of frogs being the component part of the meteorological phenomena known as "odd showers,"—though the attempt has been made to discredit them by stating that none has ever been reported to fall upon the roof of a house, or on some spot which could not be reached by a frog in the ordinary peripatetic manner. However, the natural explanation of this phenomenon is very simple, viz., that a small whirlwind passing over a pond will force water, and the creatures which it contains, up into its rarefied portion, and after travelling to a considerable distance will burst over some spot, causing the ground over which it bursts to swarm with its living freight. In the summer of 1894 there were two well-authenticated cases of frog-showers, one at Dunfermline and another near Wigan.

Tradition relates that the fact of the brown frog being common enough in Ireland is due to its having been introduced from the ships of the Dutch troops of William III., which vessels were infested with what a writer of the period called "Dutch nightingales." This story is akin to that which ascribes the introduction to our shores of the brown rat to the ships which brought over the Hanoverian troops accompanying George I. The truth is that frog-spawn was introduced into Ireland as an experiment by a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, circa 1696.

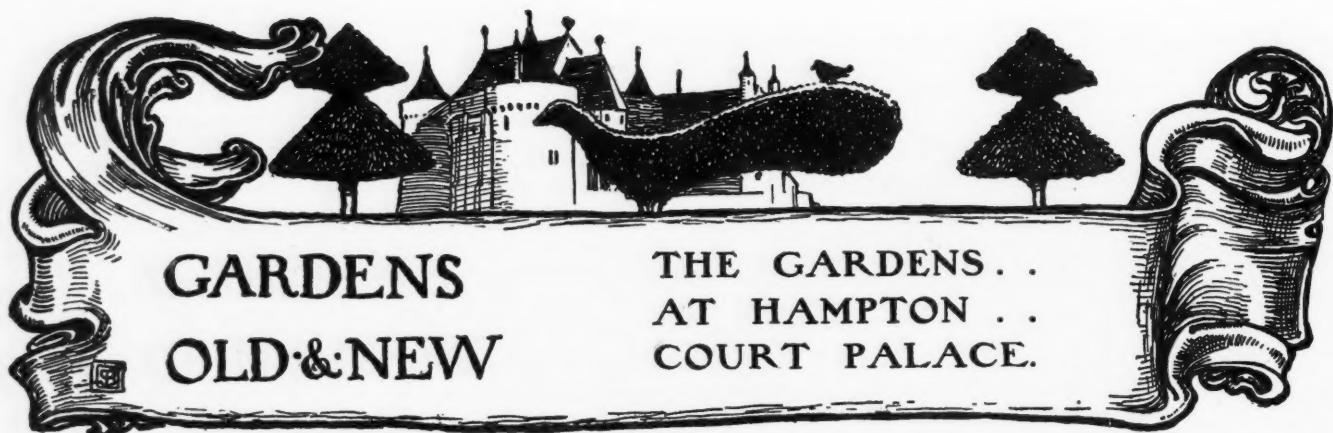
Lastly, it may be noted that the frog's way of moving is responsible for the term "the frog's march," which means carrying an obstreperous prisoner face downwards by four men, each of whom grasps one of his limbs.



Richard N. Speaight.

LADY WATERFORD'S CHILDREN.

178, Regent Street.



SO much has been written upon the fame and glories of Hampton Court, so powerful is the hold which the historic and legendary attractions of the Palace have upon the minds of all of us, and so attractive to everyone is the witchery of its marvellous array of gables and pinnacles rising above its crimsoned walls beyond the elms, as they are seen from the Thames, that it might seem well nigh impossible that anything touching the place should remain to record. And yet, as the years pass by to build up the centuries,

there springs up a greater glamour and a truer interest in the romantic memories of the regal abode. As the Tudor age of its uprising recedes further and further, and as the days of the Stuarts draw away, the more interesting does it become to survey the great scenes in which some of the most impressive events of those times were enacted. For us there is the purpose of linking Hampton Court with its gardens and grounds, of showing how they belong in a true sense to one another, and thus how in history and character those glorious surroundings are related to

the Palace they adorn. For Hampton Court was beautiful in its gardenage in the days of the great and hospitable Cardinal, its founder, who, though "lofty and sour to those who loved him not," exercised bounteous hospitality within its walls. Cavendish, in his life of Wolsey, thus speaks of the beauties of the place :

"My gardens sweet, enclosed with walles strong,
Embanked with benches to sytt
and take my rest,
The knots so enknotted it cannot
be exprest,
With arbors and allyes so pleasant
and so dulce."

He was writing of an age when the gardens had mounts, galleries, and cabinets of verdure, columns of marble, pyramids of yew, and fish-ponds for the pleasure of many.

But, before we deal with the gardens of Hampton Court, it would be unpardonable not to recall something of its history and associations. Wolsey sought relief from the heavy burden of the State in the creation of the house which he afterwards offered to his King. He brought the workmen he needed from many places, including skilled craftsmen from Italy; and there were many glass-stainers, carpenters, and gardeners in his service. To quote Cavendish once more :

"Expertest artificers that were both
farre and nere,
To beautifie my howssys, I had
them at my will."

The land was drained, and water was brought in leaden pipes from Coombe Hill. "One has to traverse eight rooms," wrote Giustiniani, the Venetian Ambassador, "before one reaches his audience chamber, and they are all hung with tapestry, which is changed once a week." Five hundred retainers were at the Cardinal's open table, there were eighty domestic servants, and a hundred others, and a hundred



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THE CLOCK TOWER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

March 28th, 1903.]

COUNTRY LIFE.

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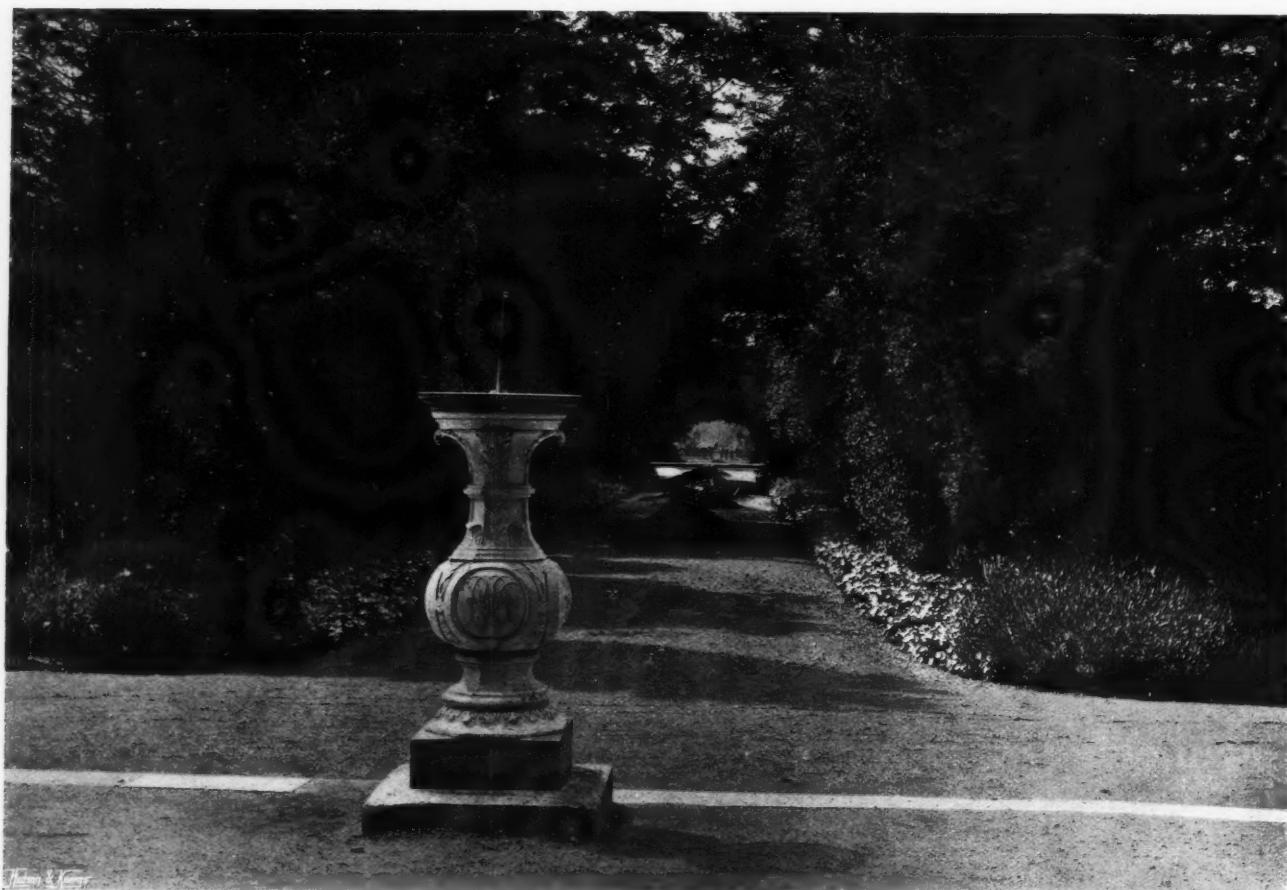


BEND OF THE CANAL.

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IN THE SUNKEN GARDEN.

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PART OF THE SOUTH FRONT.

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and fifty horses were in the stables, while in the Cardinal's company were sixty priests, and his choir numbered forty minstrels. The west front of Hampton Court was mostly Wolsey's work, and, indeed, the whole of the first or base court and the second court belong to Tudor times. The more recent work is on the east and south fronts. Therefore, save for the beautiful classic colonnade, which Wren incongruously added to the second court, we feel within these precincts that we are in the surroundings of Tudor days. We do not forget that the great prelate-statesman who presented this glorious house to his grasping master was heartlessly abandoned in his age by the King he had served so well. Nor can it escape our memory that here Queen Catherine sat working with her handmaidens, while her faithless husband dallied with Anne Boleyn in those garden boweries. Nor does it surprise us again to be told that the unquiet spirit of Jane Seymour still walks the chambers, nor that the piercing shriek of Catherine Howard is sometimes heard, as when she escaped from her room and fled down the haunted gallery to beg the clemency



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WOLSEY'S COURTYARD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of the unheeding King. Thus the memories of old times crowd thickly about these historic courtyards. Here Mary spent her honeymoon with Philip, here lived Elizabeth, here did James ponderously debate with the English and Scottish divines, here did the first Charles dwell in troubled times, and here his son held high state with Catherine of Braganza.

Much of the Tudor work at Hampton Court was never seen by Cardinal Wolsey. When the

place came to the hands of Henry, an army of workmen was employed, and the great hall was built, as well as many kitchen offices and large ranges of other buildings, some part of which, including the lodgings of Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour, were demolished by William III. It is worthy of note that in passing through the doorway at the end of Wren's colonnade in the second court, we leave the Tudor Palace behind us, and as one writer has remarked, between the two architectural aspects of the Palace there lies the historic period of the Stuarts, the presentation of the Grand Remonstrance at the Palace, the flight of Charles, the actions of



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THE FOUNTAIN COURT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE COLONNADE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the Civil War, the sale and repurchase of the place, the coming of Cromwell, the Restoration, and the final fall of the Stuarts.

We may now consider what was the garden character of the Palace in these early periods of its history. In Henry's time the pleasures covered an area of 2,000 acres, and included the Mount Garden, and the King's New Garden (or the Privy Garden) with gravel paths, mounds, dials, and raised beds. There were moats and walls, and the knotted beds were railed with painted wands in the royal colours of green and white, or were surrounded with low trellis fences. The Pond Garden still remains from those days, and, though it has undergone changes, its rectangular form, its raised surrounding terrace, its gravel path upon the low level, and its sunken parterre with the central basin and fountain, still present the features of Tudor gardening. In the corners of the low retaining wall may be seen the bases of stone piers which once supported heraldic beasts, bearing vanes and shields with the King's arms and badges. It is interesting to know that in the Chapel House Accounts mention is made of four dragons, six lions, five greyhounds, five harts, and four unicorns, "serv-
ing to stand about the pondes in the pond yard," and of the painting of 180 posts in white and

green, and sixteen brazen dials for the new garden. Paul Hentzner, who made a journey into England in 1598, visiting great gardens, has an interesting note upon those at Hampton Court. "Afterwards we were led into the gardens, which are most pleasant. Here we saw rosemary, so planted and nailed to the walls as to cover them entirely, which is a method exceeding common in England."

Charles II. had a great liking for Hampton Court, and it is interesting to find that the splendid yews and laurels, which are so remarkable a feature of the place, were planted by his gardener Rose. The large semi-circle of limes, enclosing nine and a-half acres, was also planted in his time. Hampton Court was in Stuart times our finest example of the formal or so-called

Dutch style of garden, and the yews, which now grow as Nature directs, were cut by the topiary hand into the form of obelisks.

The dominant character of the great gardens on the east side, where the three radiating avenues and the Long Water are, belongs to the period of William and Mary, though much of the work is earlier. William introduced the style of Le Nôtre, and devoted extraordinary attention to the laying out of avenues



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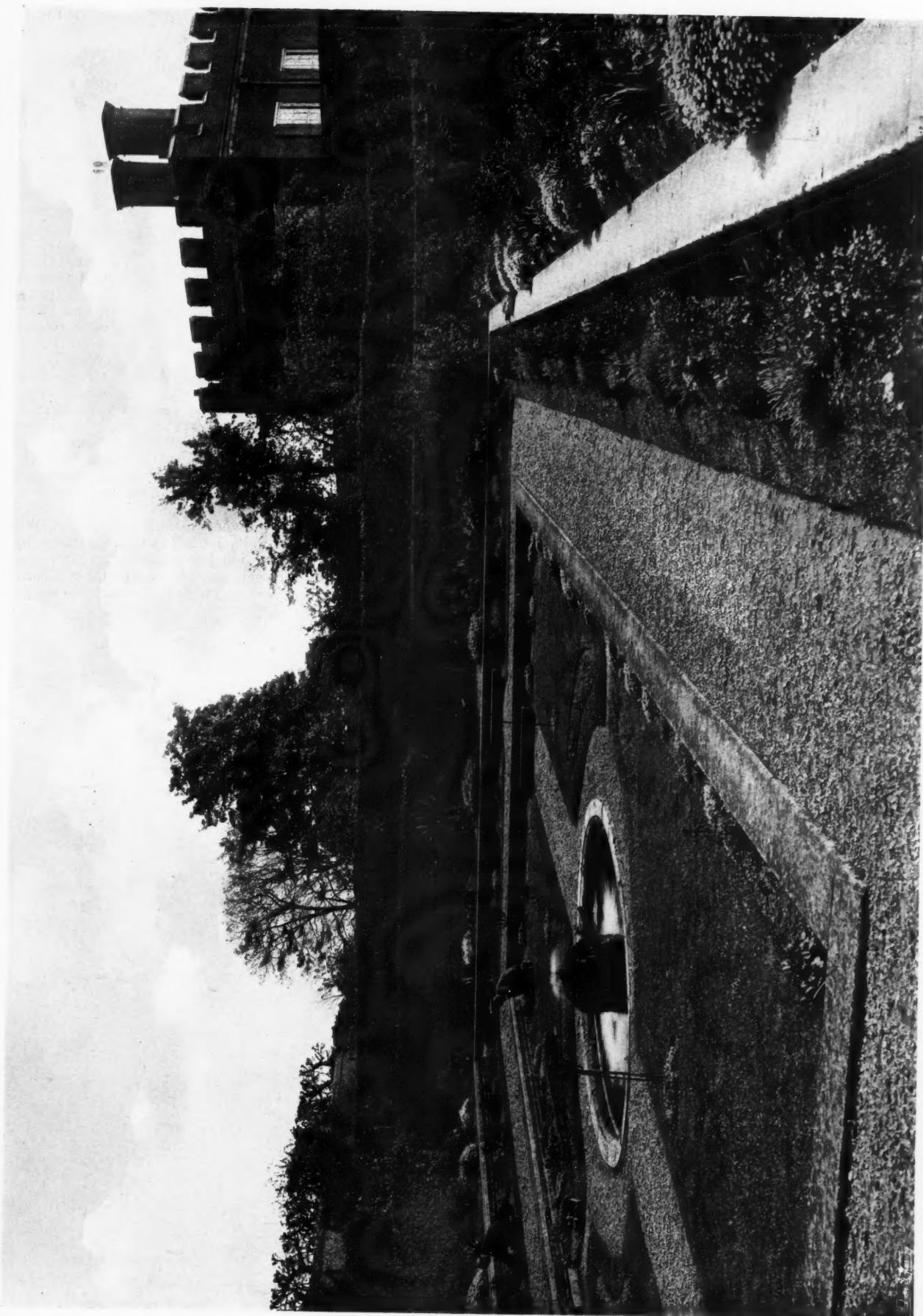
COLONNADE IN THE QUADRANGLE.

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THE POYND GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

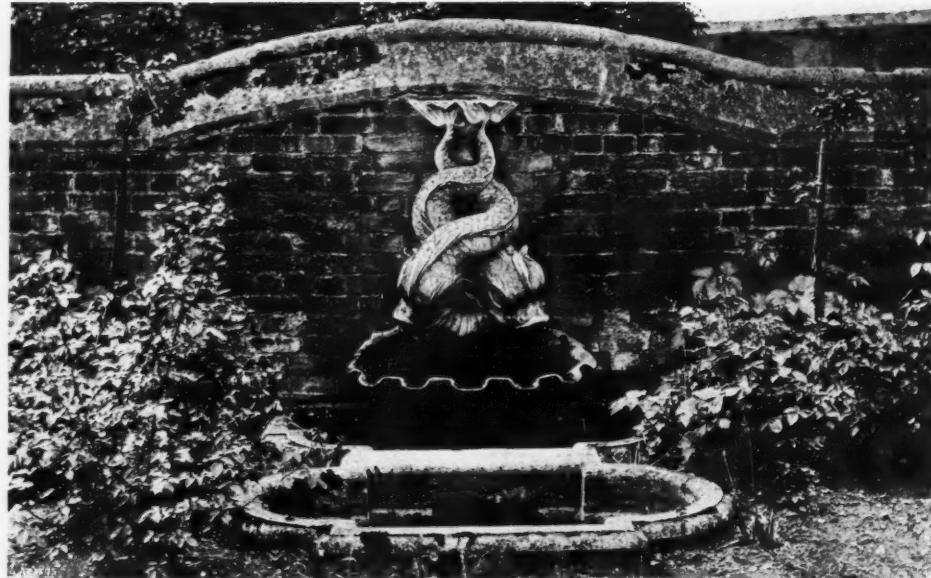
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and parterres. London, who had been a pupil of Rose, and was a partner of the well-known gardener Wise, laid out the great semi-circular parterre. The canal appears to have been completed under William's personal direction, and the magnificent avenues date from that time. Evelyn had described the place a little earlier, in 1662. He said that the park, formerly a flat, naked piece of ground, was already planted with sweet rows of lime trees, and the canal for water nearly perfected. In the garden was a rich and noble fountain, with sirens, statues, etc., cast in copper by Vanelli, "but no plenty of water." The "cradle-walk" of wych elm—Evelyn says hornbeam—which came to be known as Queen Mary's Bower, was "for the perplexed twining of the trees very observable." "There is a parterre which they call Paradise, in which is a pretty banqueting-house set over a cave or cellar. All these gardens might be exceedingly improved, as being too narrow for such a palace."

This extension of character was given by William III. The early Pond Garden and the sweet garden of the circular fountain, with the cradle-walk, are on the south side, while the old Wilderness and the famous Maze are on the north, between the Palace and Bushey Park, and the dignified arrangement developed from the semi-circle of Charles on the east received its completion in

the times of William. Queen Anne found too much box, which she rooted up, disliking the smell, as Defoe tells us; but it was replanted later, and the knotted beds appear to have been very attractive. There is an admirable bird's-eye view of the Hampton Court gardens in Queen Anne's time in Knyff and Kip's "Britannia Illustrata," showing the great semi-circular parterre, the Long Water, and the three avenues on one side, the quadrangular sunken garden and the Pond Garden towards the river, and the tennis court and maze on the other side. The maze, known as Troy Town, was bounded by tall clipped hedges.

It will be observed that this stately disposition on the east front is in perfect keeping with the formal character of the long classic façade, which was built from the designs of Sir Christopher Wren. This garden embodies one of our best English examples in the grandiose manner of Le Nôtre. William had replaced the stone walls formerly used in gardens by the splendid gates of wrought iron known as clairvoyées, of which there is still a magnificent example at Hampton Court. In succeeding reigns some changes were introduced into the garden features. The view in Queen Anne's time, which has been alluded to, shows that the semi-circular parterre was divided into sections by an inner semi-circle and radiating lines, each



THE DOLPHIN FOUNTAIN.



PART OF THE EAST FRONT.

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FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

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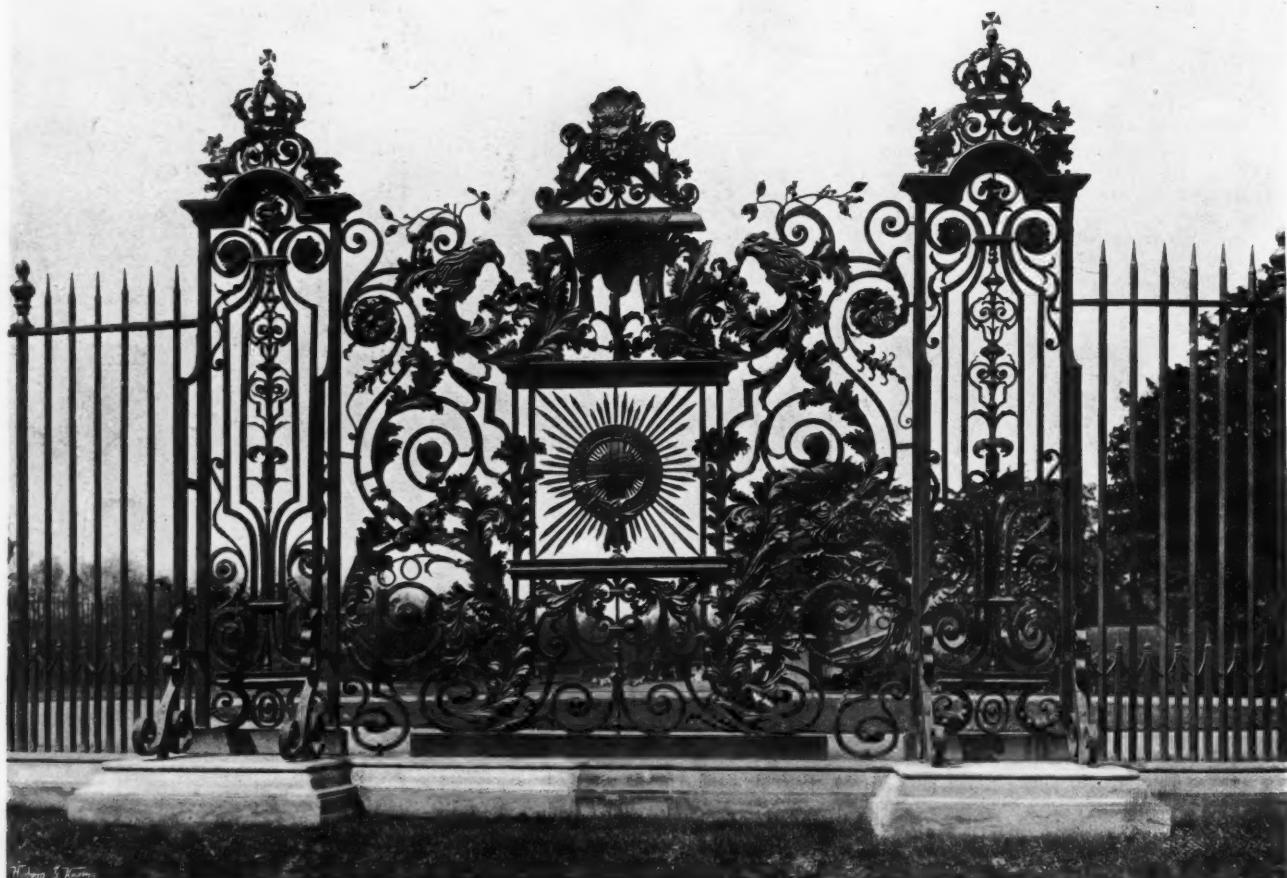
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IRISH YEWS.

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THE IRON GATES.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

section being adorned with what were known as knotted beds. These were done away with by Kent for Queen Caroline, consort of George II., the scrolls and lacework of the parterre being replaced by green lawns. The famous "Capability" Brown was the Royal gardener at Hampton Court, and it was probably he who planted the famous vine; but the park and garden bear little impress of his style.

The gardens, like the Palace itself, are unfailing in their beauty, and are maintained with generous hand, year by year presenting the same old picture, if changing in form, of their magnificent garden beauty. There are old orange trees standing in the sun on the terrace, there is the welcome shade of ancient yews, the pleasures of the great avenues, the glory of the magnificent trees, and the satisfaction that arises from the contemplation of such regal things. For Hampton Court is truly regal in every aspect. There is luxuriance in its wealth of garden detail, in the beautiful character of its gateways, adorned with sculptures and symbolic devices, the variety and richness of the vases and urns—which are a veritable instructive treasure of suggestion for the gardener—and in all the features which contribute to the richness and attraction of the famous Palace.

But the gardens of Hampton Court are but part of the great domain. The Home Park, which, for a long distance, flanks the Thames, with its glorious greenery, and Bushey Park on the north side, are united with it historically, and as outward expressions of the character of the Palace itself. We may, therefore, pass along the Broad Walk on the east front, and by the beautiful Flower-Pot Gate, with its characteristic adornments, by the Wilderness and the Maze, and issue through the great wrought-iron Lion Gates, hanging between those lofty pillars, which are such splendid examples of the style of William III., and so reach Bushey Park, with its great avenues, its triple lines of limes and horse-chestnuts, the great Diana fountain, and the shadowy groves in the park, and confess that here we are truly in a great and glorious creation of a renowned age. There is endless charm in the variety of the foliage everywhere, whether we find it at the first budding of the spring, when the hawthorns all are in blossom, or revel in its riches in the leafy days of June, when all the chestnuts are in flower, or again in the autumn, when the leafage is turned to red and gold, and all the ground is thick with the prickly husks of the nuts. Nor, when the last gales of autumn have blown, is there any less of attraction at Hampton Court and Bushey, for the lofty elms, limes, and chestnuts form a superb tracery against the sky. We find, in short, at this Royal Palace, a right note to be discovered in such places—the note of completeness and of attraction in many forms at every time of the year. Such conditions are right in association with the architectural splendours of the Palace, with all its historic memories, its legendary interests, and its romantic associations.

BOOKS OF THE DAY.

IN writing *Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford* (Methuen), Mr. E. S. Roscoe has not only shown himself to be an accomplished student of the politics and literature of the age of Queen Anne, but also rendered a public service to all lovers of historical truth. Harley was, indeed, no heaven-born genius, a statesman by no means free from faults, but he was never "small and slow," or "a dull and puzzle-headed man," to quote that which Mr. Roscoe rightly describes as Macaulay's "brilliant and misleading description of him." In fact, it is now fairly well established that Macaulay's writings are anything you like except history. As a literary advocate he has never had an equal, but his advocacy was so savage and unfair, probably

because his conviction of his own infallibility was so complete, that there is no more dangerous guide to the seeker after truth; and, after all, truth is the one thing needed. The pity of it is that truth, when it is published to the world, is sometimes dull, sometimes embalmed in volumes which rarely reach the public eye. When, for example, the late Sir James Fitzjames Stephen produced "Nuncomar and Impey" (Macmillan, 1885), he disposed completely of one part of Macaulay's indictment of Warren Hastings. But it was hardly the most interesting part, and the accomplished judge, although he could wield a graceful pen when he chose, wrote his two volumes with judicial severity and precision. So the world went on reading Macaulay's indictment of Warren Hastings, and, although it is now generally understood that Macaulay's portrait of Hastings is a travesty and a libel, his fiery words are still potent for evil; and they always will be so potent. It is a pity, perhaps, that it is impossible (as it certainly is) to invent some kind of machinery, analogous to that of the Russian censorship, for the "blacking out" of passages in historical works which have been conclusively proved to be false by more modern works which are not written in so



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QUEEN MARY'S BOWER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

attractive a style as the original libels. Of course, I am not suggesting that this is possible outside Utopia. Then sometimes the apologia offered in answer to Macaulay or a wrong historical impression (they often come to much the same thing) is bound up in the "Transactions of the Royal Historical Society," which are caviare to the general; and so, apparently, it has been in Harley's case.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am by no means suggesting that the volume now in hand is dull. The desire is rather to emphasise the fact that because it is true and not dull, because it is an able survey of the politics and the literary life of the age of Anne, it is as welcome as anything could be except that life of Harley which no less a giant than Jonathan Swift himself desired to write, but did not accomplish. Phœbus! what an intellectual treat that would have been! But for the truth itself we should have had to look somewhere between Swift and Macaulay, and, if it be true that Truth is to be found at the bottom of a well, this particular well would have been a very deep one. Addison wrote: "If an Englishman considers the great ferment into which our political world is thrown at present, and how intensely it is heated in all its parts, he cannot expect it

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will cool again in less than 300 years; in such a tract of time it is possible that the heats of the present age may be extinguished, and our several classes of great men represented under their proper characters." The age of Anne, in fact, was one of venom, passion, intrigue, and suspicion, one in relation to which it is exceptionally necessary to scrutinise the sources of information with the utmost care. Addison's estimate of the time required was too long only because the sources of information have, through the labours of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, become more accessible than they were, and it is from the "Harley Papers" that Mr. Roscoe has worked for the most part. But he has seen and studied other papers at Brampton Bryan and Longleat, and in the latter case he has been permitted to tap a volume of the publications of the Historical Manuscripts Commission which has not yet been issued. The result is a true and interesting life of Harley, which shows him in quite a new light.

Born in 1661, Harley entered Parliament early, was of exceptionally pleasant manners, and was elected Speaker of the House of Commons in 1701. "Mr. Harley, an able gentleman, chosen," writes Evelyn; and he was re-elected for the last Parliament of William III., and again in 1702. He was awkwardly placed. As a hater of European complications, he was a natural Tory of those days; as a friend of liberty, a Whig; but a good Speaker. Then he joined Godolphin's Administration (while he still remained Speaker) at the express request of Marlborough; after Blenheim, he rallied round him the moderate Tories as well as the Whigs, and was of great service to the Ministry by virtue of his tact. But even then he was called a "trimmer," and the truth of the matter is that he had always what we now call a "cross-bench mind"; and on occasions of popular excitement that kind of mind is rarely popular. Moreover, during the period when he and Godolphin were members of the same Administration, he was accused not only of "trimming," but also of exercising on the Queen more influence than was right, and of disloyalty to Godolphin. The accusation was, in some measure at any rate, wrong, for there is no doubt that Anne followed her own tastes in her Church appointments. But the Greg business looked ill for Harley's honesty. Harley's clerk, William Greg, was undoubtedly in secret correspondence with the French Secretary of State, and Greg was indisputably employed by him as a spy. Mr. Roscoe, it must be admitted, looks with somewhat too lenient an eye on this "political mischance," which compelled Harley at last to place "his resignation in the hands of an unwilling Sovereign." The immediate result of this first accusation of high treason was to throw Harley into an association with the Tories, and the intriguers about the Court, in which "he could scarcely express a sincere opinion without offending a colleague or his Sovereign." The next result of it was the fall of Godolphin, and the association between Harley and his cousin, Mrs. Masham—afterwards Lady Masham—which ended in Harley's return to power, with Bolingbroke for colleague, and a distinct peace policy in view. Politics have seldom been less cleanly, in any country or in any age, than they were in England then, and from no point of view can they be regarded as pleasant reading. Harley was at least as honest as most of his contemporaries; that is all that can be said. But if the politics of the day are nauseous reading, the literary associations of Harley are delightful, and I must hurry on to them, merely remarking that Mr. Roscoe succeeds, by careful enquiry, in placing Harley's conduct towards the Jacobites in a new light. He fooled both the Hanoverian Successionists and the Jacobites into believing that they had his sympathy, "the most exquisite piece of management that has been acted by any Minister of State in this or the last age," says Defoe; but he did it all without being treasonable, says Mr. Roscoe. It was somewhat curious, and in harmony with the life of a "trimmer," that his acquittal by the House of Lords should have been based on a technical ground. Take him for all in all, Robert Harley wished his country well, and he was never the fool whom Macaulay imagined, nor the villain Bolingbroke described twelve years after he was dead.

These things are now so long past that we can hardly realise them. Imagine a timid woman on the Throne, swayed by her shrewd lady-in-waiting, and great statesmen under the necessity of courting her through her lady-in-waiting. Imagination fails in the effort, and the right to pass judgment on the actors in such a political arena is lost if one cannot realise the conditions. But, apart from all this, the book teems with interesting personalities. Harley was not only a great book-man and book-collector, but also the constant associate of literary men. Defoe he employed habitually, half as journalist, half as spy. With Swift he lived on terms of intimacy. "In your public capacity," wrote Swift, "you have often angered me to the heart, but as a private man never once"; and Swift was faithful to the end. In retirement in Herefordshire or at Wimpole, he was in frequent correspondence with Matthew Prior; and Pope, Gay, Swift, Arbuthnot, and Parnell were amongst his associates of the Scriblerus Club. "Not one of Harley's memories, as in his peaceful Herefordshire home he surveyed the critical and anxious years of his public life, can have been so agreeable as that of the hours which he passed

in Arbuthnot's rooms in St. James's Palace, with the men of letters who are inseparably identified with the reign of Anne, and among whom the harassed statesman for a short time could forget his political anxieties." That was the true Harley, the kindly and courteous scholar; and the man who could be a conspicuous figure in that unique society is worthy to be commemorated.

CYGNUS.

"WOLFVILLE," by Alfred Henry Lewis (Ibsister), and *Wolfville Days* (same author and publisher) are American books of a type to which England is not accustomed; but they will repay study. Also, it must be frankly owned, they require it, for the language is stranger, and in its way more flashingly picturesque, than anything which has crossed the Atlantic up-to-date; and the publisher has been well advised to prefix the second of the two volumes with a glossary, although *Wolfville* should be read first. Let there be a candid confession. I yield to none in appreciation of American humour, but beginning with *Wolfville Days*, which was a mistake, I was discouraged at first. The metaphors of Arizona were too much for me; for they are the metaphors of the cattle-country, of poker, which I know fairly, and of faro, a game to which I am a stranger. But I was persuaded by a friend, who admires the work of Alfred Henry Lewis, to persevere until, as the publisher says, I was "on terms with" the author; and the reward was abundant. Indeed, so strongly has the vivid style impressed itself on my mind that I could almost write in it; only, if I did, the readers of COUNTRY LIFE might be inclined to suspect that I was, to use a common Arizonese expression, "plumb locoed." That, which may serve as a specimen, means mad, for there is a plant in Arizona known as the loco-weed, which is supposed to make mad the man or the animal who eats of it. But, believe me, it is worth while to achieve familiarity with this strange language, for it introduces one to the society of a company of men who, though they call whisky nosepaint, and use it as such, and use their revolvers pretty freely, and possess rough-and-ready views on religion, which they express with a quaintness bordering on the blasphemous, are yet very much alive and robust. Gradually, as the old cattleman slings his series of yarns, one gets to know Doc Peets, and Cherokee Hall, the quiet, brave, tender, and taciturn man who keeps the faro bank, Old Monte, his bibulous stage driver, Jack Moore, the chief of the Stranglers—grim name that needs no interpretation, Enright, the really leading spirit of the camp, Texas Thompson, whose wife has divorced him at Laredo, and all the rest of his hardy, but in their way honest, gang. Also one realises the life and its principles. It is a life in which it is simpler to stake a pony than its saddle, for saddles are scarce and ponies can be had any moonlight night; a life in which there is an unwritten law regulating the use of the revolver, the transgressor of which may count on a short shift unless public opinion decides that "this yere corpse is constructed on the squar"; a life in which human existence does not count for much; a life in which it is not manners to approach a cattleman who is seen branding a yearling alone, for the odds are that he is stealing it. But these rough fellows, who file the sights of their guns (revolvers) lest they should catch in their pockets, have many elements of chivalry in their nature, especially an exceeding tenderness for women and young children, and they are brimful of humour at all times. So is their language. What, for example, can be better than the derivation of Mavericks? "It all comes when cattle brands is first invented in Texas. The owners, when cattle is all mixed up on the ranges, calls a meeting to decide on brands, so each gent'll know his own when he crosses up with it, and won't get to burnin' powder with his neighbours over a steer which breeds and fosters doubts. After every party announces what his brand and y'earmark will be, an' the same is put down in the book, an old longhorn (Frontiersman) named Maverick addresses the meetin', and puts it up if so be that's no objection, now they all has brands but him, he'll let his cattle lope without markin', an' every gent'll s.vey said Maverick's cattle because they won't have no brand. Cattle without brands, that a-way, is to belong to Maverick, that's the scheme, an' as no one sees no reason why not, they lets old Maverick's proposal go as it lays. An', to cut her short, for obvious reasons, it aint no long time before Maverick, claimin' all the unbranded cattle, has herds of 'em: Whereas that's good authority for statin' that when he makes his bluff about havin' no brand that time, all the cattle old Maverick has is a triflin' bunch of Mexican steers and no semblances of cows in his outfit. From which on-promisin', not to say barren, beginnin', Maverick owns thousands of cattle at the end of ten years. It all provokes a heap of merriment and scorn. An' ever since that day onmarked an' unbranded cattle is called 'mavericks.'"

Mr. G. Stewart Bowles, who was once a sub-lieutenant in the Royal Navy, won a wide popularity by "A Gunroom Ditty-Box" and *A Stretch off the Land* (Methuen) will add to his reputation deservedly. It is a collection of yarns and talks, breathing the spirit of the sea and of the Senior Service in every syllable, and told most excellently well. The case is clearly one for reviewing by extract, for quoting one passage out of many which show that Mr. Stewart Bowles, who will no doubt make his mark in politics some day, is possessed of a literary force of which Mr. Rudyard Kipling himself might be proud.

"Thus he showed me that this is no question of a hand beneath the sea, but that each ship is in truth a free creature, living her own life, breathing her own breath, and held straight above the swirl and welter by the brains and hearts of men. And so, when he had gone, I knew it to be. But it does not look so. For, in the great spectacle of Fleet Manoeuvres, reality seems to have no part, and so poor a thing as man no place. It is the playing of Leviathan in his own element, a thing whose reasons may not be too closely enquired into. To the ordinary watcher, even if only from an after-bridge, it all seems to be a sort of sea-miracle, a wonder to be lovingly remembered indeed, but never to be explained; a true mystery, almost a matter of the spirit. And one feels that to enquire even ever so lightly into reasons why, would be blasphemy and destruction. But the smiling little lieutenant had brought me back again, so that I found myself once more remembering what, in the immediate presence of so much splendour, one is almost certain to forget. Leaning out again towards the shining, ordered lines, forging, as it seemed, of their own tremendous wills, along the glassy floors, I remembered that down below, deep beneath the dripping seas on

which we stood, far, far down in the bowels of the business, there lay a land where no mystery is possible, a grim country where there is no paint and no veneer, where catch-phrases never excuse neglect, where things are called by their short names, where sharp coal lies dully up against black, uncompromising iron, and where men, blackened almost out of the image of their Creator, hack and strain and scrabble between the two. And now once again, as the engines suddenly eased, I had found that country. I had gone down, deep there, beside its deepest mysteries. I found my stoker friend. The hoarse clangour of the gongs gave me welcome as I crossed its frontier; the enormous rolling of the cranks made its music in my ear. Past the little engineer I went; passed and left him; and the hot breath of the first stoker took me fiercely by the throat. Turning a corner all framed in lighted iron, the tramping engines seemed suddenly to fade behind me. There were visions of hot faces, black and sweating faces, faces tired and with white eyes; and when I looked up again, there were still more faces, and the thunders of a thousand steam devils tearing at the boiler-joints sang all around me. Truly, I was 'Below.' All round, apparently in endless succession, stood great rows of shuttered furnaces. Somewhere in the great distance, across the blinding horror of that place, I heard the sound of singing. Striding towards it, I bent low down before a door. The door hung in great grooves, black as the night, and somewhere high above it one could see great rakes and implements. But I bent down and entered it, seeking the voice. And in another moment, before I could quite tell how, Sidgwick himself was springing to receive me with all that wealth of quiet good manners to which

the upper classes have never yet attained. I leant against the bunker door and breathed heavily. At least I had kept my trust."

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

What a Girl can Make and Do, by Lina Beard and Adelia B. Bearl (George Newnes). In an otherwise admirable book there is no fault to be found save with the first sentence of the preface. "This new century, bringing with it the strong, healthy, independent American girl, makes a demand for new exercises of both mind and body." In the name of fact and truth, why "American"? We will back the average English, Scotch, Irish, or Welsh girl to be stronger, healthier, and more athletic than the average American girl. We say nothing of independence, except that our own country-women are quite as independent as they used to be. To them this book, with its numberless and practical suggestions for filling up spare time in a useful and amusing fashion, will be invaluable. It is the best thing of its kind that we have come across.

Colour-Sergeant No. 1 Company, by Mrs. Leith Adams (Jarrold). This popular novel, well printed on fair paper, in small octavo, in a form sufficiently good for binding, is now to be had for 6d. The combination of tolerable equipment and cheapness is really wonderful.

The Dahlia, by Richard Dean, Robert Fife, John Ballantyne, Stephen Jones, William Cuthbertson, and Leonard Barron (Macmillan). The names are a sufficient guarantee that this is, as it appears to be, a thorough and practical work.

SIGNS OF SPRING.

HERE is nothing that tells of the arrival of spring more certainly than the brook, even when it flows as that one in the picture down the wild moorland. On the moor itself scarcely a sign of new vegetation is visible. The heath that was so purple last August is now perfectly black; where the green bracken and the ferns grew, now only shrivelled dry leaves rustle and whistle in the wind. On



A. Warnford.
Copyright
"THE LITTLE BROOKS THAT TUMBLE AS THEY RUN."

low-lying fertile land the coming of spring has already been signalled; violets, buttercups, daisies, and the procession of beautiful wildlings that the sweet of the year brings with it have long been showing themselves in meadow and woodland and hedgerow. The trees, except a few of the evergreen varieties, are as leafless as they were in December, and along the banks of the stream scarcely a hint is yet given of the wild flowers that will partly conceal its beauty by showing their own when the season is more advanced; but yet even here the voice of the spring is in the air. The birds long have been whistling its welcome and calling their own love-names to each other, some musically, and some, as we think, unmusically. Likely enough

when the rook calls in the tall elm tree his voice sounds as sweet to those of his own kind as ever did that of a fair lady to her lover. He goes about his domestic duties just now in full sight of the whole world, and he certainly has been in full sight of the photographic lens that took him so well. Yet a little while, and the leaves will have spread out a green curtain around his home, and we shall only know his presence by the cawing of the older birds and the squawking and squeaking of the younglings. Nevertheless, his building is a welcome sign that spring is at hand. It tells that the ploughman has been busy in the fields turning up an abundance of worms for him to eat, for courtship here as elsewhere is an inevitable consequence of material prosperity. Every bell on the foaming stream seems to tell that winter is over and gone and once more the time of the singing of birds has come.

Philosophers say that when the sap rises in vegetation there is a stirring too in the blood of human beings. The young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love, and even children are said to become restless as spring advances. Luckily they have



PERCHED HIGH.

a thousand happy methods of working off this feeling. New games, or rather old games revived, come in, and the pastimes of winter are forsaken for tops and marbles, hoops and balls; and then with the lengthening spring days comes the spirit of rambling that leads one out in search of objects that as often as not are forgotten. There is first of all the very delightful pursuit of birds'-nesting, which begins when the first blue eggs of the hedge-sparrow are seen in its round nest. Thrush and blackbird proclaim by the melody they pour from every thicket that their love affairs also are in happy train. How delightful was it in days gone by on sunny afternoons to pass from field to field, encountering at every turn the signs of new life! Rolled in a ball the hedgehog was found where the marsh-marigolds grew, and in many a corner tiny rabbits cocked their ears in pretty but instinctive dread of man. The water-vole came out on the willow branches under which the first rising trout of the year made their earliest dimples. The moorhen clucked as she sang among the withered reeds, and high overhead caroled the lark — sweetest of English song-birds.

Nor must the ploughman be forgotten. How delightful to watch him ploughing with the strong team that came stamping, ramping up to the headlands and seized a mouthful of the young greenery before turning to the furrow again. That is as significant a touch of spring as is to be found in the gambols of lambs, the bleating of calves, or the young foals' tricks. But in early days things passed unconsciously before eyes intent on seeking the early spring flowers, though the memory of them comes back with that of the scenes.

Most of us who are grown up and who enjoyed the privilege



A. Warnford.

THE WINDY TALL ELM TREE.

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Sheaf, I.W.

THE PRIMROSE PATH.

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of being born in the country, have pleasant remembrances of the delight in gathering primroses. Each can call to mind the familiar places where one was most certain to find them in the early spring. My own memory is of a place very different from that in the picture. It was a dene such as is to be found on many an estate. Dene, probably, is the same word as den. The one I particularly refer to was a great cleft in the earth, as if some gigantic plough had passed through it. Along the bottom of this cleft ran a tiny brook, sometimes making dainty waterfalls over the moss-covered stones, at other times submerged in the dead leaves that got clotted in the hollows. Being so far down, it was always dark, and to any but a silent man might have appeared dismal, but the birds seemed to love it. The little dipper or water-ouzel used to nest in a hollow in one of the tiny cascades, and there its nest and white eggs were seldom sought in vain. Thrushes and robins and wrens used to find nest-sites in the roots of trees which were exposed and laid bare by the rains and the rivulets that came tumbling down the slope. The trees were mostly beeches, and on the top was a great rookery, so that the cawing of old and young birds mingles with the memory one has of the wind blowing through the branches. In summer great ferns and masses of bracken used to cover everything, but when the primroses first appeared in tufts there was scarcely any other vegetation. Here it was pleasant indeed to gather them, and the place seemed always full of adventures of one kind or another. There were many wood-owls in the plantation, and it was far from being uncommon to see one going about blindly in the open daylight, generally followed by a crowd of shrieking small birds, who seemed to take the bewildered night bird for one of their greatest enemies. They did not make nearly as much noise about the sparrow-hawks, though they built regularly in the clefts of some of the trees in the margin which spread out over the sandy road. The squirrel, too, lived a happy life among the beeches, and in early spring he frequently had to come down to the ground in search of food, for there were no nuts then, and the squirrel, though he lays up a store for bad times, seems usually to forget its location, and would starve in the midst of plenty if he did not descend to Mother Earth and pick up something that she always retains for her children. When that fails, the squirrel is not at all above playing thief to the thrush and the blackbird. He is, as a matter of fact, very fond of eggs, and is not averse to an unfledged bird when he cannot get anything else to eat. Wood-pigeons built occasionally in the trees, and seemed to love to get as far away from the rookery as possible. Thus a visit to

the dene was full of adventure for a Nature-loving boy, and the days used to fly past very quickly there. The brook when it was low could easily be dammed, and when it was in flood was unmatched for sailing little boats on; and so there were a thousand pleasant occupations, and as often as not the basket which was to have been filled with primroses was carried back empty. Nevertheless, it is curious, looking back over the long years, how pleasant this wasted time seems to have been; and one can scarcely look even at a picture of primroses without recalling a vivid impression of it.

EATING HERON.

IT is now the rarest thing to meet with anyone who has eaten, or who will confess to have eaten, heron. It therefore greatly interested me to hear that two persons I was acquainted with in a West of England town had partaken of that strange meat. My friends, two gentle, timid middle-aged sisters, spinsters, and both in delicate health, told me all about it in the simple, truthful way that was natural to them. A bachelor brother came into a farm on the coast of Monmouthshire, and for the first few years they kept house for him. He was fond of shooting, but he impressed it on their minds that he killed nothing merely for the pleasure of it—every bird was for the table. Now the sisters had a very imperfect knowledge of such matters, and some of the creatures he brought in did not look like table-birds. The barrow-duck, with his patches of bright colour—they admired it, but did not want to cook it; then there were strange, spotty birds with such funny beaks! These were curlews, and when they made the discovery that they were very good to eat, in spite of their funny beaks, they got over all suspicion, and were convinced that their brother knew best. But when one day he



A USEFUL IMPLEMENT.

brought in a heron, they ventured to say that he must have made a mistake. Such a bird, so lean and scraggy and with such vast wings and such a loose plumage, with such legs, such a neck, and above all such a beak, was surely unfit for the table! He told them in an offhand way that it was all right; but after an interval of two or three days, finding that they still were troubled in their minds, he went more into the subject, and informed them that a heron was not a bird to be despised—that it was far and away superior to curlew and barrow-duck, and was once a favourite dish in all the great houses in the land. Nothing more could be said after that; the bird was hung up in an old little-used dairy, its great long-toed feet tied to a hook in the ceiling, and so tall was it that its beak touched the floor. It had an uncanny look suspended there, its big wings half open, and when one of the sisters had occasion to go to that lonely room, she would glance apprehensively at the bird; or, if she came there without remembering it, the sudden sight of it would startle her into a scream and hurried departure. The bird had got on their nerves; but after a fortnight their brother pronounced it in the right condition for cooking. He ordered it to be roasted, and they loyally and dutifully set about the unpleasant task of preparing it for dinner. Their disgust at it was increased when they discovered a trout a foot long in a decaying state in its gullet. Finally, when the bird was properly roasted in the oven and brought to the table, filling the room and, indeed, the whole house with the smell, they watched their brother as with resolute, almost a stern, face, but keeping silence, he proceeded to carve it and help them very liberally. What could they, unhappy, do? Each cut and raised a very small tentative morsel to her lips and quickly put it down again, and then they began to steal little timid glances at their brother, watching him help himself to a huge plateful. One big mouthful he took, and to their amazement chewed and swallowed it. They looked affrighted at each other, then saw him raise another big morsel on his fork; but before it had reached his mouth down went knife and fork, and jumping up he fled from the room. They did not see their brother again that day until supper-time. Then he came in looking pale and dejected; he only remarked in an absent way that he did not feel hungry just then. He said nothing about the heron, nor did he ever again mention the subject.

W. H. H.

FROM THE FARMS.

THE VALUE OF PEAT MOSS.

FARMERS do not all recognise how much more economical it is to use peat moss rather than straw. There was a time, of course, when straw was in the position of being a drug in the market, and the farmer used it for bedding and other kindred purposes, but latterly it has come to be employed very much in the manufacture of various kinds of fodder and forage for horses and cows in towns, and is, consequently, greatly in demand for chaffing purposes. The result of this is that straw, at the present moment, is costing something like 55s. a ton, whereas peat moss can be had for about 32s.; the latter, too, has great manurial advantages, and it is in the way of being a disinfectant, and is also an extremely absorbent substance. Thus the elements of manure which it is most desirable to place on the land are contained in it, and another point is that it involves less trouble than straw, which requires to be changed much more frequently. Under these circumstances it must be held to be uneconomical to use straw for any purpose that the cheaper kind of bedding would be equally good for. In dairies, for instance, straw is constantly wasted when used for food. It is in most cases not weighed, but tossed in at the end of a fork, and this is done even with hay, whilst its value would be double if it were properly chaffed and mixed with other substances. The value of peat moss for the poultry-house has long been recognised.

HOME-MADE.

An old proverb says that the good workman never complains of his tools, and on the farm, as elsewhere, it often happens that the workman succeeds best who can at a pinch make his own implements. We give here an interesting example of home-made taken from a farm in Essex. It will be seen that it is describable as a duplex instrument, being rake and roller combined, the combination being effected by lashing them together with a strong rope, while the poles for the horses are simply the stems of young trees, not quite straight, perhaps, but sufficiently so for the use of the farmer. No one would advise the beginner to go in for such implements, but the farm from which this was taken is a very well-managed one indeed, and is itself a standing proof of what it is possible for mother-wit to effect when capital is not forthcoming. After all, money cannot do everything. It is not the tool, but the hand that uses it, which counts in the long run.

THOROUGH-BREDS ON FARMS.

It is always a question of extreme difficulty to say whether farmers are well advised to attempt to breed blood stock or not. In some parts of the country it is done with tolerably good results, but we are somewhat doubtful if this ought to be recommended as a general policy. The advantage that the Shire possesses over the thorough-bred on the farm is that at a comparatively early age he is able to work for his own living, and from two years old until six, which is generally considered the most saleable



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B. MR. SHIRLEY'S ALVIN. Copyright

age, he does more than earn his keep, because farmwork is suitable to the heavy draught horse. On the other hand, a thorough-bred is not able to do this. Only the other day the writer was asked to look at a little filly bred by a farmer. She was nearly four, and had never done any work at all, as the farmer is a busy man, and neither hunts, rides, nor drives—at least, he does drive, but has an old mare that suits his purpose admirably. We can scarcely think it would pay him to rear thorough-breds. However, this is a fair point of argument, and whichever side is taken, the reader will be glad to look at the excellent portrait of Mr. Shirley's Alvin, one of the winners of the King's Premiums. He is by Master Kildare out of Nightgear, and is a chestnut. That he has both muscle and legs will be apparent to anyone who looks at him.

THE PRICE OF GRAIN.

If there are any farmers who are so short-sighted as still to place their dependence upon the grain crop, they must have had some very bad moments this year, for the tendency is, and has been for some time, a continuous fall, so that the price of wheat is not much better than it was in the time of the great depression. Wheat now runs about 25s. a quarter—that is to say, quite 2s. less than this time last year. Barley has gone down to about 22s., a decline of about 3s. 8d. on what it was last year, and British oats to about 17s., or some 3s. 6d. lower than last year. In these circumstances, it must be a serious question what to do with wheat. There is very little land in England on which it can be cultivated so as to give any profit to the farmer if sold under 28s. a quarter, and those who are parting with it at present prices are undoubtedly incurring a considerable and definite loss. The better plan is to use it for feeding purposes. The tail corn can always be made available for poultry, and even that which is of better quality may be profitably used, mixed with other substances, for the feeding of cattle and sheep and the fattening of pigs. The farmer of skill and judgment will always score over those who go purely by routine when he has the sense to refuse to take his grain to market while prices rule as low as they now do. He can easily turn it into meat on which a good profit can be made.

GOOSE FARMING.

In these days we cannot help thinking that Mother Goose is, to a considerable extent, neglected. It is true that down in Lincolnshire the same old plan is followed that has been practised for so many years. A man takes round goslings very early in the year and lets them out on the half-profit system, that is to say, he has the initial cost of providing the birds, and the farmer incurs the expense of maintaining them till they are fit for the market. But the division is not an equal one, and of recent years there has been a disposition on the part of the farming wives to rebel against the arrangement. In fact, by far the better plan is for the farmer to take the risk of the whole of it and claim all the profits. It is not a case into which subdivision can enter with advantage to either party. Our illustration gives a familiar scene on the goose farm. There is the slow river, still as a pond, with the rich meadow beside it and the thickly leaved trees at some distance. Some of the geese are disporting them-



K. E. Brooks.

THE THRASHING MACHINE.

Copyright

selves in the water, others are waddling on the grass, and all of them are preparing, unconsciously, for the feast of St. Michael, on which roast goose is the only right fare.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

THE RETURN OF THE BIRDS.

IT is worth while to take exact notes of the arrival of migrating birds in autumn, if only for the pleasure of observing the fidelity with which they retrace their course in the following spring, because in the matter of bird-life the latter part of March almost exactly corresponds to the latter part of October, except that the birds are travelling in inverse order and in the opposite direction. Thus, in October, shepherds and others, whose work or pleasure takes them along the "greens" which fringe the landward side of the sea marshes on the East Coast, always scan the furze clumps carefully as they pass, for here the wearied woodcocks often fling themselves to rest after their difficult passage of the North Sea. These furze clumps are the very first cover on firm land that they reach, and the birds are sometimes so tired that they can be picked up by hand. Those which escape, however, soon pass on to suitable feeding-places, and throughout the winter it would be useless to look for woodcock on such dry, wind-swept slopes. Yet, when the Ides of March return, you may again look for woodcock in exactly the same place, not, as in the autumn, too tired to move, but strong-winged and evasive, getting up suddenly before your feet as you penetrate the furze clumps, and going off at a great pace in zigzag flight. Now there seems to be no reason why woodcocks should be found in these furze clumps in March, except that on their return journey in spring they carefully retrace their autumn course, halting where they halted safely before, and starting to cross the sea from the same point at which they arrived.

RETRACING THEIR JOURNEY.

Scarcely less marked is the fidelity of other birds to the route by which they travelled in autumn. Early in March the same pasture which had received the first flock of redwings on arrival in October is thronged with the last flock on their departure. A week later a large company of restless fieldfares assemble round the same clump of trees which had served them as a post of observation when they first arrived in this country five months before. In the same half-mile of the trout stream which the green sandpiper haunted for a few days in autumn, you discover him again in spring, showing a conspicuous patch of white in contrast with his dark wings and body as he goes piping before you down the margin of the stream. More striking, perhaps, is the case of the siskins, which appeared last autumn, owing to the strong east winds that blew across the North Sea at a point of the East Coast where they had not been seen for years. There they have reappeared again this month, frequenting the same spot where they rested in October. Thus we see that, while in autumn the birds—most of them young birds of the year—may have no notion whither they are flying before the north-east wind, yet in spring they accurately retrace their wanderings, and so at last with favouring winds return to the spot where they were born.

RECOGNITION OF LANDMARKS.

From the point of view of civilised humanity it may seem wonderful that small birds should be able to find again the places where they halted on a long journey undertaken nearly half a year before; but civilised humanity has



C. F. Grindrod.

A FINE FLOCK.

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for many centuries allowed its faculty for remembering landmarks to fall into disuse. One of the qualities of savages, which always strikes explorers with surprise, is their amazing aptitude for following a trail or retracing a journey through what looks like primeval jungle or trackless waste. And birds need to exercise this quality far more regularly than do savages. Each flight in search of a new feeding ground, each boisterous wind, each alarm of a hawk may carry them in a few minutes far out of sight of home, and probably every bird guides his way home by distant landmarks several times a day. Indeed, the recognition of landmarks is probably the paramount faculty of winged birds, and, as such, may be carried to the same height of development as the parallel faculty of the sense of smell in four-footed animals. It would have been little use for beasts that crawl upon the ground to acquire a special talent for recognising distant landmarks, since their horizon is constantly limited by near objects only a few feet in height. In the same way it would not have served the birds' needs to acquire a keen sense of smell, when they habitually view the world around them through large spaces of untainted air. We might, therefore, have presumed that birds must have acquired a wonderful power of recognising landmarks analogous to the quadruped's wonderful sense of smell, even if we did not know this to be the case from the performances of our homing pigeons.

MIGRATION MADE EASY.

And the ability of pigeons to find their way home with promptitude and despatch, even when their flights are increased by a hundred miles at a time, shows how easy it must be for migrating birds, as a rule, to cross the sea in safety. If you look at the map of Europe, you will see how impossible it would be for birds, travelling before a north or north-east wind in autumn, and keeping their own coast-line in view as long as possible, to be carried a hundred miles wide of land on the other side; and in spring, when they retrace their autumn route, "taking off" with a favourable wind from the same spot on the coast where they arrived in autumn, it is impossible for them to miss the distant landmarks on the further shore.

FOLLY OR WISDOM?

Sometimes birds seem to carry their fidelity to their nesting-homes beyond all reason. Last year, for instance, a number of peewits made their nests as usual in a sloping field which had been for some years under grass, and scarcely had they begun to lay before the field was broken up for cultivation. Nowise deterred by this misfortune, they made their nests on the fallow, and had just filled them with eggs when the ploughs came again on the scene and wrecked their homes for a second time. Yet this year they have returned once more in their usual numbers to nest in the same field. This looks like foolishness; but, after all, it may be wisdom. Perhaps the collective experience of the peewits has taken the measure of our agriculture, and recognises that the safety which is ordinarily to be found in the midst of a vast sown field more than counterbalances the destruction which takes place when once in a number of years the land is broken up so late for ploughing.

THE REDSHANKS' RISKS.

Below this sloping field lie marsh pastures where other pairs of peewits annually nest, and here also come with the greatest regularity by about the middle of March two pairs of redshanks for the same purpose. Here they escape the risks of the high tides which annually swamp so many of the redshanks' nests round the salt marshes; but, on the other hand, an overwhelming necessity compels them to undertake a hazardous journey for their young, so soon as these are hatched, across two miles of country, through a village and across two high roads, to the coast. Very pretty, then, it is to see the old redshanks perching on trees and hedges, even on telegraph wires and cottage roofs, as points of vantage whence they can whistle urgent instructions to their tiny children, who are running like mice along the shelter of the hedges. During this journey disaster is often encountered; yet it is evident that the advantages of the nesting site counterbalance the risk, because year after year the end of March always sees two pairs of redshanks installed in the same place.

THE BLUNDERING OIL-BEETLE.

One of the commonest objects of the country at this season is a very fat and glossy blue beetle which crawls about the margin of sunny footpaths, laboriously dragging an absurdly heavy body behind it. Its wing-cases contain no wings, and even if they did the creature's clumsy weight forbids the supposition that it could fly. No other British insect seems quite so helpless as this lumbering wingless beetle that scrambles slowly over the grass in early spring. Yet its abundance shows that it knows how to protect itself, and if you pick it up you will notice several small beads of coloured fluid exuding from some of its joints. From this it gets its name of "oil-beetle," and no doubt you will take upon trust the statements of those enquiring naturalists who have discovered that the liquid has "burning, acrid taste." Birds and beasts and insects of prey appear similarly to take upon trust the discoveries of their ancestors to the same effect, for they all leave the oil-beetle severely alone. So it tumbles conspicuously among the pathside grass, and, having no need to fly, it has given up wearing wings and grown too fat for violent exercise of any kind.

A PROBLEM OF EVOLUTION.

But what makes the oil-beetle worth notice is its extraordinary life-history. After staggering about for a while it encounters a male of its own kind—much smaller and rather less clumsy than itself, and with larger wing-cases, which would seem to show that the male oil-beetle abandoned the habit of flight at a later period than his wife. She then proceeds to lay eggs among the herbage, and from these eggs emerge little active six-legged creatures which lurk among the flowers until a bumble-bee comes along. Then, while the bee is engaged in getting honey, these little imps jump on to it and hold on by its hairs until it returns to its nest. Here each little robber alights and makes a square meal of one of the bee's eggs, after which it changes its skin, as a man might change his clothes when going from one occupation to another. For under the bee's egg was a large receptacle full of honey, in which the six active legs of the embryo oil-beetle would get unpleasantly entangled. So it puts off its legs with its skin, and thereafter

wallows in the honey like a naked, almost legless maggot. When the honey is all eaten, this maggot-like grub changes into a sort of motionless pupa, from which emerges presently—not an oil-beetle, as one would naturally expect, but another sort of grub, which goes through a further stage of life, and then turns into another sort of pupa, from which finally emerges an oil-beetle! Thus there are five distinct stages between the egg and the beetle, which seems rather a laborious method of arriving at so indifferent a result. But as a complex problem of evolution the oil-beetle has few equals.

E. K. R.



VILLAGE CHURCHES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should appreciate the kindness of any of your correspondents who could give me the name of a particularly fine village church where there are a number of really interesting monuments, and where the church itself is of some exceptional interest. Any photographs that may be sent to me shall be carefully returned within a very few posts.—H. E., 20, Tavistock St., Strand.

EARLY WOODCOCK'S NEST.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It may interest your readers to know that I secured a woodcock with nest and two eggs on March 19th, which proves that they breed in England and nest very early.—JOHN A. DOCKER, Penrith.

WATER-FOWL IN ST. JAMES'S PARK.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

"A goose should lay

On Valentine's Day."—*Old West Country saying.*

SIR,—I wonder who is responsible for the welfare of the water-fowl in St. James's Park? For some time past a valuable collection of birds has been seen there, notably the six mandarin ducks, which are a sight to watch when going through their pairing evolutions. Only a fortnight ago I counted more than thirty tufted ducks on the water, all of which had the full use of their wings, and anyone crossing the bridge soon after sunset must have noticed a number of them flying rapidly up and down the lake before making off for their nightly rambles elsewhere. When all the birds are making arrangements for nesting, someone in office gives the order that the lake shall be cleaned out, and an army of scavengers take possession. The only place the birds have left is the small piece of water near Storey's Gate, which is, of course, overcrowded by the pinioned fowl. The tufted ducks are gone, and so are the dabchicks, which had arrived before the cleaning-out process began, and breeding operations generally put a stop to. Also, why have so many herring-gulls been introduced? It is only a short time since I watched one of these birds catch, drown, and swallow whole three sparrows in less than ten minutes. What chance would a brood of newly-hatched ducks have with such marauders? Why should the birds be disturbed in this manner? If necessary, the lake might certainly be cleaned out in December or January, when the leaves are all down; but once in two years seems to me rather superfluous. How many years ago is it since the Round Pond, the Serpentine, and the Regent's Park waters were drained? I see a question was asked in the House a few days ago about the Serpentine, and the authorities considered that it was not necessary, as the bathers had not complained! And now a word about the pelicans. The pair of old birds which had been in the park for years were, ornithologically speaking, unique. Nowhere in England, and I should think hardly on the Continent either, could you find a pair of pelicans at large with the full use of their wings. Every evening, about sunset, they would settle on their rock for the night, but before doing so, and when the wind was blowing from the south-west, I have seen them fly round the park several times, high above the trees and Government buildings. Recently quite a crowd used to watch their movements. They appeared to have got more or less accustomed to the occasional salutes fired, but on the one Sunday during the winter of 1902 when skating was allowed in the park they became quite panic-stricken, and perched in the elm trees looking more like sheep than birds. They were the most devoted couple, never more than a few feet apart, and when the smaller bird would sometimes attempt a game of romps, the larger one gravely tolerated it, but never seemed to join in. Alas! the powers that be procured another pair, I believe from the Zoo, and, of course, pinioned. At first there was no outward hostility, but latterly the newcomers tried to obtain possession of the favourite sleeping rock, and our old friends, resenting it, flew away, and I see by the papers have, of course, both been shot. If the authorities in power are so crassly ignorant as to the habits of birds, why, in the name of common-sense, do they not consult with those who have had some experience? No one wanted the new pair of pelicans, and the result has been to destroy this unique ornithological feature in the bird-life of London. I see the magpies are building in one of the poplar trees on the eastern island.—EDWARD LEWIS HYDE.

MEMORIAL OF THE LATE JOHN CROZIER, M.F.H.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It has been suggested that, as a memorial of the late veteran Master of the Blencathra foxhounds, the sorely-needed restoration of Threlkeld parish church, which overshadows his grave in the village of his life and love, would

be both a fitting and enduring one. This scheme has the hearty support of those most concerned with the Blencathra Hunt, and steps are being taken in the proper quarters to give effect to this proposal, and it is hoped the project will go forward.—J. ORMANDY CROSSE, Rector of Threlkeld.

GEORGE TICKELL, Hon. Sec., Blencathra Hunt.
HENRY HOWE, Assistant Sec.

Threlkeld Rectory, Penrith, Cumberland.

THE DANGERS OF GOOD SOCIETY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I send you the following story in case it might interest some of your more juvenile readers. A pair of Royal swans on the Thames were provided with materials for a nest in a space carefully enclosed by hurdles. Here the hen bird took up her abode, and, having laid some eggs, proceeded to "sit" and hatch them out. A duck which was also looking out for a nesting-place thought that a spot close against the hurdles would be a sheltered position, and, furthermore, be near to Royalty. Unfortunately Mrs. Duck possessed feminine instincts, and one day, being filled with curiosity to see how her Royal neighbour was getting on, poked her head through the hurdles and quacked. Without a moment's hesitation the Royal dame snapped her head off and left on the nest the lifeless body of vulgar Mrs. Duck, to serve as a warning to her relations not to be too hasty in attempting to enter aristocratic circles.—A. W.

PHOTOGRAPH OF A WOOD-OWL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I send you a photograph of a wood-owl, from life, which I hope you may think of interest. He was born in the New Forest, but lived till just lately in a tree in a garden in Bournemouth. The trains have alarmed him; although his hoot is heard somewhere in the district, his whereabouts cannot be discovered. Your columns note that people have been attacked by a wood-owl, but I fancy he is too shy a bird by nature in the country woods to try this scheme! But his pellets of mouse and fur of rabbit are cast up under an oak tree I well know in Dorset, showing what a voracious feeder he can be. I have heard him, and seen him fit bat-like in the dusk, but have never been attacked. To my mind the claws of the owl, not his beak, are most deadly, and he can grip even a hand pretty firmly and painlessly thus. I hope you may think that a difficult portrait is better than none, in this case, for he is very restless in sunlight.—BOURNEMOUTH.

A TYPICAL IRISH RURAL SCENE.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—One may drive for miles in beautiful, barren Connemara in the early winter without meeting a human being. On fair days the roads into Clifden, the untidy little capital of Connemara, are crowded with black cattle, sheep, and dilapidated side-cars. On such occasions the donkey whose picture I took on the road near the mountain village of Letterfrack, carries in his baskets to the market, eight miles distant, fish, potatoes, and even live pigs. But on the off days of the week he is sent with his ragged driver to bring turf from the bog for the cabin fire. The early winter

is the time for carrying home the turf that was cut in May and has been drying for six months on the bog land. The creels shown in the photograph are made by the country people, for their own use, of plaited osiers, or "sallies," as they are called locally. Every native knows how to make them, and they are an indispensable part of the furniture of the cabin. They are hung on the donkey across a square saddle of plaited straw and old sacks. The driver's seat is usually well behind them, on the very tail of the animal. The donkey is as familiar a feature in the West of Ireland as the pig himself, and he costs even less to keep, as he supports himself on the rough mountain-sides or by the roadside on the scanty grass. The little girl who is being photographed for the first time in her life is about eleven, but looks older than her years—a common occurrence in this part of Ireland, where the Spanish type still maintains itself so conspicuously that a native of other counties feels that "a Galway man" is something of a foreigner.—M. F.



BAXTER'S COTTAGE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I send you a photograph of a delightful specimen of those quaint old black-and-white buildings whose portraiture answers to many an ancient ballad and fireside story; moreover, this particular specimen is of considerable historical interest, from having been the home of Richard Baxter, the celebrated Puritan divine, the friend of Cromwell, and the author of "The Saint's Everlasting Rest" and many other favourite theological works. The house—for in size it is between that of a farmhouse and cottage—stands in the little Shropshire village of Eaton Constantine, which nestles under the protecting shadow of the Wrekin Hill (albeit Salopians call it a mountain), and commands a delightful panorama of the picturesque Severn valley, immediately below, and of the Welsh mountains. Of the life in this village during his boyhood days, Baxter has left a humorous account, and one that testifies to the fact that it was indeed a "Merrie England" before Charles I. quarrelled with his Parliament. Feastings, junkettings, dancing on the green, and bucolic sports seem to have been of frequent occurrence; at any rate, during the summer months these were never omitted of a Sunday afternoon. At these revels the village parson was the Master of the Ceremonies, and Baxter is shocked at his frivolity, but excuses him and his neighbouring contemporaries on account of their up-bringing. One parson, he relates, had been promoted from the flail, and another was the son of an ale-house keeper, while these two and others would throw dice against any man, and could hold their own at back-sword play with any ordinary antagonist. From Eaton Constantine Baxter went to London, where he was fortunate enough to seek and win the patronage of a Salopian grandee, Sir Henry Herbert of Chirbury, who held a high position at Court. Throughout his long, busy, and successful life, however, he never forgot the charm and peace of his Shropshire home. Like not a few others of its class, "Baxter's Cottage," as it is termed, has changed little with the fashions of the times. The present occupiers are always ready to bid a visitor welcome, and to show him the old-fashioned oak wainscoted parlour, where Baxter, as a youth, was wont to sit up half the night studying the Bible. The whole interior, in fact, is almost just as it was when Baxter lived there.—H. G. A.

